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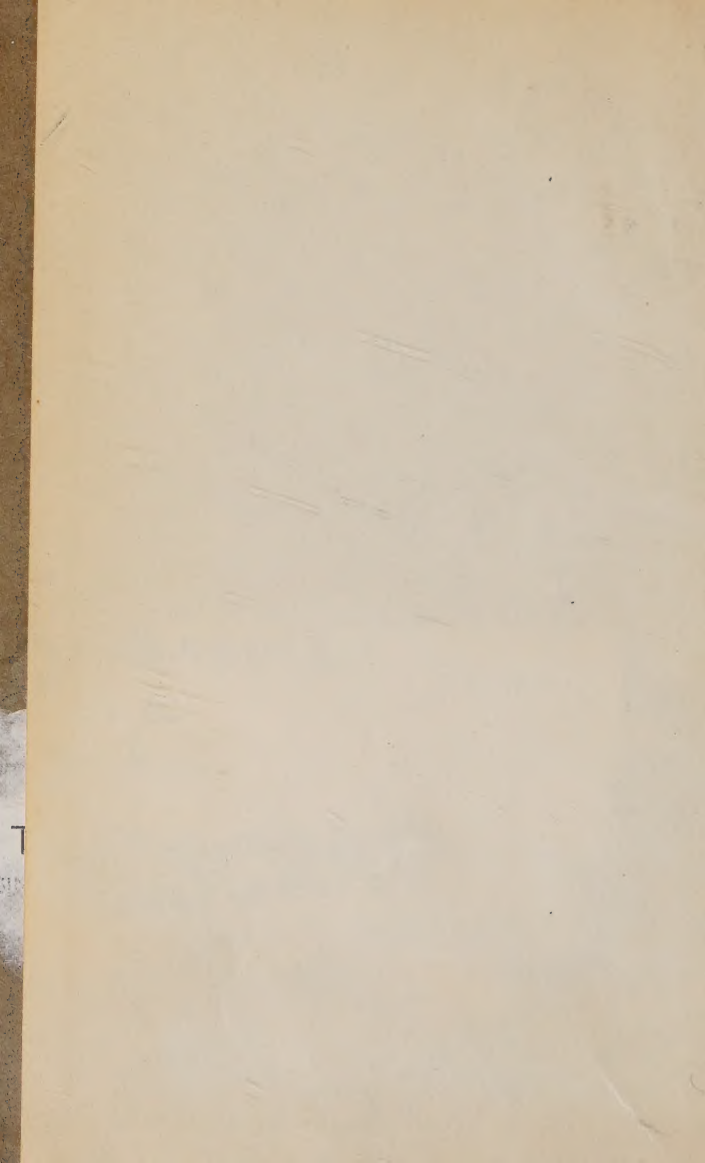
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HISTORY OF THE WORKING  
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# HISTORY OF THE WORKING CLASSES IN FRANCE

A REVIEW OF LEVASSEUR'S HISTOIRE DES CLASSES  
OUVRIÈRES ET DE L'INDUSTRIE EN  
FRANCE AVANT 1789

*By*

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## PREFACE

Nothing sooner reached the intellect as well as the heart of the scholarly woman whose review appears in this little volume than the state of the poor. To examine the conditions of laborers, to study the economic causes and results operating for or against their well-being, was one of the chief interests of her life. Especially was this true of the great period of history known as the Middle Ages. Her extensive investigation in this field was first shown by her doctorate thesis, *Aetleiding*, a study of those early Norse laws by which children of illegitimate birth could be given social position. A few years later followed *Slavery in Germanic Society during the Middle Ages*; and still later the review here reprinted of Levasseur's *Histoire des classes ouvrières et de l'industrie en France*.

Though prevented by circumstances from producing a monumental work of her own,

these three short studies amply prove her ability and equipment, and are in themselves valuable contributions to the subjects treated. That on slavery has indeed been recognized as authoritative. This review of Levasseur's great work is not merely an ordinary review. It is rather a running commentary in brief, for which the author himself showed warm appreciation. It throws emphasis on the chief features of the work and arouses the English reader's and the student's desire for further acquaintance with the original. This is the justification for reprinting it as a separate volume. It appeared first in the *Journal of Political Economy*.

K. M.

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## CHAPTER I

### MEDIAEVAL PERIOD

The monumental work<sup>1</sup> of Levasseur has already been the subject of one review in this journal,<sup>2</sup> at least as far as the Roman period is concerned. But inasmuch as only a fifth of the volume is occupied with Roman labor, it seems still more important to call attention to the remainder, which is devoted to the far more complex, and in certain matters vastly more difficult, period of the Middle Ages. Historical literature does not often possess a work such as M. Levasseur's. The subject, whether treated from the point of view of imperial or feudal legislation, is an exceedingly exacting one, in regard to both methods employed and to results obtained. The most painstaking calculations may

<sup>1</sup> E. Levasseur, *Histoire des classes ouvrières et de l'industrie en France avant 1789*. Tome premier, livres II-IV. Deuxième édition. Paris: Rousseau, 1901.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of Political Economy*.

prove fallacious because of the peculiar nature of the sources which, as everyone may easily experience, refuse to give answers to important questions, yet overflow with insignificant things. But while the reader may sometimes question the statements made, it is not for us, with no access to material such as M. Levasseur and his informers possess in abundance, to pass any hasty criticism. The patient student will find the author's views generally verified by the facts. At any rate the book is worthy of the closest attention by historians and economists alike. The only trouble is that even a book of 600 closely printed pages cannot do justice, except in a general way, to the multitude of problems (of value even for our own time) which a minute study of mediaeval times brings to one's attention. The life of the nations in its various forms and phases is fast becoming a topic of absorbing interest. M. Levasseur's book is an exceedingly great help toward a more perfect understanding of national life and a solution of historical problems. To bring



before the public the merits of this important contribution to historical literature is the purpose of the following brief review.

At the beginning of the fifth century Gaul was abandoned to the Barbarian invasions. Who were these strangers? At the time of Caesar they were still partly nomads who lived on milk and cheese and dressed in the hides of their beasts. Even a century later Tacitus found them little advanced, remaining strangers to Roman manners, arts, and institutions. Their industry was confined to the weaving and dyeing of coarse cloth, and to painting their shields in bright colors, while their commerce consisted in buying from strangers such things as they needed but could not themselves make. But four hundred years later, when their institutions again came under observation, associations (which may have existed in embryo when Tacitus wrote) enjoyed already an established existence. We hear of fraternities, guilds, whose members were sworn to mutual assistance and protection.

These institutions probably originated in the old custom of brotherhood established between military men, who blended blood to signify how close and interdependent was their relation. As times became less turbulent and town life progressed, the need of mutual reliance expressed itself in brotherhoods on a broader basis, with an economic purpose more clearly defined. That Roman institutions, known as they were over the larger part of Europe, may have entirely influenced the makeup of the guild is possible, although lately the guild has come to be looked upon as a purely Germanic institution. It is difficult to see how the guild as a mere social gathering could justify its existence, while as an industrial race the Germanic nations amounted to almost nothing until after the crusades. Be that as it may, M. Levasseur, as little as any other authority, can solve the question until some inscription or other sign from the far past helps to throw light on the origin of the guild. But that Charles the Great so vigorously condemned the

guilds from fear of conspiracy appears to us to point to a danger from the rising of the subject Roman population rather than to fear of turbulence on the part of the Germans, who were agriculturists rather than artisans.

M. Levasseur thinks that the invasions left nothing but universal destruction and desolation behind them; that the hordes of Germanic warriors, being brutal and greedy, ate the land bare as would a swarm of locusts. The big cities were the ones most frequently sacked, and although the majority of the population remained Gallo-Roman in possession of their property, an economic revolution took place which utterly changed the life of the conquered provinces. The country was thrown hundreds of years back in development, and as after an inundation weeds take the place of grain, so Roman institutions were superseded by German. Having no inducement to commerce on any large scale, no center toward which its energies might be attracted, the city, the Roman *municipium*, became

merged in the *pagus*, and economy changed from commercial to rural. The Frankish villa or domanial farm, as an expression of the decentralization of political and economic energy, took the place of the town, which was now only the seat of a fitful and rapacious government and maintained influence only through the administrative ability of the functionaries of the church. The count M. Levasseur calls a new magistrate; but if the office was new, the name is at least a very old one. The count had no interest in the town as such, no understanding of its ancient rights. His chief interest lay in the organization of successful raids, in making the bishop submit to his commands, and in extorting what wealth there remained from the unhappy inhabitants. The system of taxation so efficiently organized by the Romans was, on the whole, appreciated and kept up under the supervision of the graf; but now that commerce had dwindled and every household restricted itself to what it produced, the system could not possibly prove as remunerative as be-

fore. It is probable that this general condition of affairs underwent no change until the first dissolution of the Frankish empire. Charles the Great, after so many generations of dismal experience, understood better the functions of government. While he cared nothing for cities, he saw at least how greatly the development of rural economy might further the national strength. Himself a great landowner, he set an example for the other great lords in the management of his estates. Building probably on methods tried and found profitable by the church, the only institution which understood and practiced economy on a large scale, he published the ordinance for all the farms belonging to his palaces which is so favorably known in mediaeval history. Owing to such orders and example, but probably still more to the necessity of centralization, the rural estate developed into a concern of mighty dimensions, the nucleus of future principalities from which sprang new forms of the economic life, industry, town life, and commerce.

M. Levasseur's account of industry at this early stage, as managed on the large estates of the church and of the baronage, is extremely interesting. The feudal lord in his castle, or the abbey, with the houses and huts of merchants and artisans clustering against the walls and the farms distributed over the flat land, was in more cases than one the founder of a new town. Constant demand for provisions, the necessity of having the makers of new articles close at hand, made of the castle and the monastery a center of industry and of exchange, and finally under its very shelter a thriving community grew up which existed by its own efforts. Even the large cities which had survived the time of political insecurity took a new lease on life and, protected by the large immunities granted the church or the great lord, rose once more into prominence. Stagnation was past; civilization began again.

The laboring classes were made up of unfree, half-free, and free. Concerning the unfree M. Levasseur has not much to say,



and it is probably true that the number of slaves engaged in industry as in agriculture was constantly dwindling. The number of free laborers, too, was constantly decreasing, many becoming tenants and even serfs under the stress of changing economic conditions. On the other side there was the freedman, the *litus*, and the *colonus*, all half-free, with whom the country estates were populated. Every lord, lay or ecclesiastic, every town and every village, had its staff of unfree and half-free laborers who were either attached to the soil or to the owner's household. Certain large estates, such as the enormous domains of the abbey St. Germain-des-Prés in Paris, had a perfect army of laborers. For the regulation of their holdings and their contributions the marvelous *Polyptyque* of Abbott Irminon was drawn up, which is for our understanding of the management of ecclesiastical property what the *De Villis* of Charles the Great is for the lay. M. Levasseur justly goes into particulars concerning the *Polyptyque*, which, although incomplete, represents the abbey

as possessing 1,717 servile holdings divided between 2,859 households and inhabited by 10,282 persons of all ages, altogether an area of 42,050 acres out of a total of perhaps 172,977. And the abbey of St. Germain was by no means the richest of the monasteries within the Frankish empire. The supplies which each household was expected to furnish are minutely accounted for in the *Polyptyque*. M. Levasseur includes some general statements for illustration. Thus the 1,430 homesteads were every year to furnish: 4 horses,  $55\frac{1}{4}$  oxen, 5 heifers, 1,079 sheep, 2,132 liters of wheat, 50,979 liters of spelt, 4,005 liters of oats, 572 liters of mustard, 2 wagons and  $11\frac{1}{2}$  wooden footboards, 105 laths, 40,978 shingles, 20,133 narrow boards, 372 staves, 186 barrel hoops, 350 horseshoes, 4,891 chickens, 25,318 eggs, etc. As for the required labor to be done for the abbey by 25 homesteads, the term *corvée* (forced labor) is too indefinite to give any clear understanding of how little or how much might be demanded in day or week work; but such as it was, there were 125 to

be done each season; 300 rods to be plowed, harrowed, and sown; 75 days' week work at times when there was no forced labor; 50 long cartages and 225 rods to fence. The dues and duties were very unevenly distributed among the different homesteads, some having much, others less work to perform, largely because of the uneven size of the holdings themselves, some being comparatively large, others apparently too small to yield anything but the scantiest sort of living. Work must have been hard, often unwillingly performed and slow; hence the overseer was to see to it that the lord received what was his right.

✕ In cities, however, energy was more abundant. Here the population was less mixed; here from olden time was the seat of government; here Roman law was remembered the longest; here were the large markets, the largest number of merchants and artisans; here, too, was the seat of the first mints with opportunity for exchange on a larger scale. We hear of crafts carried to great perfection, particularly in the line of

gold- and silversmith work. The guilds met here, and industry here found its natural home. Travelers came through, foreigners and the universal peddler, the Jew, with his stock of rare merchandise and ready money. The larger portion of the laboring population consisted of half-free who in these more liberal surroundings brought more initiative to the task performed. But free labor was no less common among the Gallo-Romans who engaged in trade and industry, while the Germans were soldiers or agriculturists. For the city, too, had to have its defenders and its providers. The neighboring lords, but even more the church, whose estates contributed so largely to the protection of the city, allowed their retainers to settle there, and their surplus population as well as their surplus produce found in the city a market with profit for both. From the maxim of the church that labor sanctified man (in marked contrast to both pagan and barbarian view of labor), artisans received an incentive to diligence which bore its fruit. From the monastery

emanated, and around it clustered, a multitude of all sorts of mechanics who worked partly for themselves, partly for the convent. In the town of St. Riquier (risen on the premises of the abbey of the same name) in the ninth century the unfree population, comprising a fair quota of the total (14,000), was grouped by streets or quarters, such as the quarter of merchants, the quarter of armorers, of shoemakers, of linen weavers, each quarter paying an annual due from the produce independently of the ground tax. In order to improve the work, probably also in order to reduce expenses, the monks built canals and employed water-power for their stamping-mills and tanneries, besides their gardening. But while the monasteries as producers were the largest establishments of their kind, in their dealings with the world at large they had to employ middlemen to buy and sell; and here was the chance for enterprising traders to do business on a large scale. That monasteries by their incessant industry rapidly accumulated wealth was but natural. Con-

stant watchfulness, frugality, little or no opportunity for waste, could lead to but one result. Soon the monastery owned everything that was worth owning; every enterprise worth having was either in its possession or under its guidance; work for its own sake or for the love of God lost attraction; energy, like an electric spark, moved away from the religious corporation and animated once more the lay. The mercantile instinct reasserted itself in its natural surroundings, production and enterprise returned to its original channels, and the town, once destroyed by the predominance of rural economy, re-entered into its rights and flourished on the ruins of the structure which at first had seemed completely to exclude it. M. Levasseur asks whether the religious communities gained by thus being separated from active life and devoting themselves to contemplation and studies. The manual labor seems to have been the balance needed in a life of silence, meditation, and often mental lethargy.



The communal movement was the outcome of conditions which had thus gradually improved, but which still left much to be desired in regard to security of property and personal liberty. In one way it was ushered forward by the crusades, a more direct and intimate connection with the South and the East; but it was no less an outcome of the brighter and more hopeful prospects within, the cessation of invasions, and the gradual settling of society into more stable and lasting forms in keeping with its political and economic needs. In the twelfth century society had already so progressed that the conditions of the past, when mentioned in documents, were not understood any more. Instead of the former variety, uniformity then prevailed. All land was divided up into fiefs and freeholds, but the latter soon, for the sake of uniformity, were counted as fiefs too. Society was composed of two classes: lords and vassals, freemen and serfs. Yet, in spite of this simplification of conditions, peace did not reign, but war. Brigandage was common;

peasants and burghers had to form associations for mutual aid in order to prevent plunder. The attempt of the clergy to check the disorder by words of warning or by exacting pledges had no particular effect. Besides this open spoliation of the weaker by the stronger, there was another, more law-bound, but not the less oppressive. The customary rights of lords over their tenants had to be sanctioned by a mutual bond of sympathy in order not to be destructive in the extreme. The taxes were often assessed arbitrarily, and the lord as a matter of course availed himself of every privilege which his territorial rights gave him to appropriate every industry, compelling his tenants to frequent his market, grind at his mill, and otherwise give him the benefit of their preference, whereas other opportunities might have been for them both more profitable and more convenient. As consumer rather than producer, the lord found it necessary to make every claim he had on the industry of his tenants count for as much as it possibly could. That he suc-

ceeded shows the isolation and the self-centered character of feudal life, and also shows the danger which a neighboring city would be to the narrow order of the rural system. The lord, to make life more attractive on his estates, would have to reduce his demands on his serfs, or even liberate them. For if liberty was not given, it was often taken by the serf escaping to the city, where the air made him free.

// This demand for liberty, combined with the strenuous efforts on the part of the lords to make their authority maintain itself permanently even in the city, caused the formation of political associations such as the commune. The history of the commune is probably better known than most other phases of mediaeval life. It is the struggle for constitutionalism, self-government, and republican institutions at the time when such efforts, in the midst of an apparently firmly established feudal régime, seemed altogether premature. But now as always the cities were the places where only the ablest could succeed, and where national

enterprise on a large or small scale was first started. Here impressions were most rapidly transmitted into action, and the very closeness of intercourse taught men to combine. The town, which had once been the very pulse-beat of life in the vast Roman organism, became once more the center and culmination point of energy for the huge and sluggish body of the feudal state. The commune was hated and abhorred by the lord, whether count or bishop. As his officers and retainers were excluded from the associations, his constant effort was to annul, or to get his suzerain to annul, the charters which necessity had compelled him to grant. But the solidarity of resistance on the part of the burghers, and the profits accruing from being reasonable and even conciliatory toward the new movement, often conquered the lord's opposition. The commune became self-governing in all matters of importance and recognized the supremacy of the lord only in the payment of certain annual dues, to which the lord gladly consented rather than lose every vestige of

former authority. M. Levasseur counts more than forty communes whose charters are preserved, situated almost without exception north of the Loire; but the total number of free cities is much larger. That within the thus self-governing community a new struggle began between the propertied and the non-propertied classes; that sometimes aristocratic, sometimes democratic government prevailed, was but a further attempt to break down the exclusiveness of feudal society. But this led to nothing further than that the commune lost its stability and was gathered in under the sway of the crown. A large portion of the French cities, however, both in the north and in the south, acquired a limited independence; but in the feeling of general insecurity they remained under some lord's authority, preferably under the crown's, thus furthering their economic well-being without endangering their political existence. Hence the communal movement in its climax was only short-lived, but in the impetus given and the results for the working classes, for the wealth

and the intellectual progress of the nation, it was of lasting importance.

These pages form an introduction, as it were, to the chief object of interest in M. Levasseur's treatment of mediaeval labor: the history of the guilds, or corporations, as they ought rather to be called. The emancipation of the communes goes back in its origin to the end of the eleventh century. The necessity of protecting their interests politically brought about the larger association from which the independent city took the name; the necessity of securing to the artisans the use of their property and the exercise of their profession caused whatever loose economic organization had existed before to combine more closely. What was needed was to put each profession on a firm basis of rule and supervision; to protect the individual, and through him the trade of the city, from the effect of fraud, competition, and undue influence from quarters which had neither the welfare of the citizen nor the success of the city at



heart. These corporations held, and in order to be successful had to hold, a monopoly of the trade, or the branch of the trade, which they represented. M. Levasseur makes a point of describing the earliest corporations and tracing their motives in combining and the advantages derived therefrom. Based on unfree labor, they probably owed their growth and their struggle for eminence to free initiative. From the beginning the corporation was the very nerve and pulse of the city; but only in the twelfth century did it fully develop its hierarchy of apprentice, valet, and master, and become conscious of its purely industrial purpose, eager for privileges with which to combat rivaling trade. Naturally the larger cities, such as Paris, were the ones in which the development of corporations was first noticeable and where the heads of these concerns first exercised political influence. As nowadays tradesmen and manufacturers call attention to themselves by advertisements, so in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when the corporations were in

possession of their freshest energy, one of the privileges most eagerly sought and most proudly cherished was the right to partake in the yearly processions of the church, to donate altars and painted windows, and maintain service in properly adorned chapels, or to erect edifices of costly character as a monument of their wealth and devoted spirit. Hence it is that these corporations set their mark in more than one way on the history of the municipality and the nation. The very monopoly upon a profession demanded that a strict supervision be exercised so as to turn out only the best kind of work; yet the anxiety with which the workmanship was watched suggests also but a limited range of production as well as of consumption. If anyone asks why M. Levasseur has not among his rather well-assorted statistical material included some pertinent information as to the import and export, as well as the general output, of any one corporation, it is because in most cases no such information is to be had. The sources record nothing of that kind, and,

besides, in most cases the city was sufficient only unto itself. The city was its own chief consumer. Hence this lack in M. Levasseur's excellent work, most keenly felt, is most easily accounted for.

What M. Levasseur tells us about the rules governing membership within the corporation, if not new, is not without interest. The three orders—master, valet, and apprentice—covered corresponding degrees of efficiency, and accordingly of importance, within the association. Lowest in the ranks was the apprentice, who was but an aspirant to future honors, and even so was but sparingly admitted to the opportunity. A master could have only a limited number of apprentices in order to avoid overcrowding the profession, and also in order to insure personal instruction to everyone. The master's son paid nothing for learning the trade, but the stranger did. Whether at this time the change from apprentice to valet was a matter of years only, or whether it was a case of showing ability, is difficult to say. The time set for completing the apprenticeship

was, according to the trade, from three to eight, ten, and even twelve years; and besides, the master could expect a payment of from 20 to 100 sous (25 to 125 francs), the sum diminishing with the number of years. The length of time seems reasonable when a difficult trade was to be learned and the material to be handled was expensive, as in the case of a jeweler; but it seems out of all proportion in a number of other trades. But the long apprenticeship was an outcome of the tendency to restrict energy and make the crafts absorb all the intellect there was. And it was but natural that an artisan would be content with serving as an apprentice for a lengthened period rather than to have no access to the crafts, and hence to a livelihood. According to the contract, confirmed by oath and to be followed to the letter, the apprentice was to obey implicitly his master and never testify against him. If he left his master before the time, he was to be searched for and brought back in a fashion which forcibly recalls the serfdom from which the crafts had risen. After the

third escape he ceased to be a part of the corporation, and no master could employ him. Certain trades forbade the runaway to remain in town unless he fulfilled his previous obligations. The master could even sell him, as if he were a serf. But if he sold him or ceded him to another, he could not take another apprentice until the appointed time was past. The apprentice did the hard work, washed and cooked for the family as well as for the valets. The master on his side was to lodge, board, and clothe his apprentice. If refractory, the master could punish him, which privileged to gross abuse. The apprentice might only too often become the victim of avarice and brutality, and hence even in the opinion of the statutes there might be excuse for his running away. In such case he was allowed to lease himself to another master.

The next stage was that of workman, valet, or journeyman, as he was afterward called. If the valet came from outside, he had to show his credentials for having served his apprenticeship. Often he was asked to

give proof of his ability before being engaged. Thus the pastry-makers forbade engaging a valet who could not make a thousand little cakes in a day. Valets who wished to be hired assembled at dawn at some open square or crossroad and waited for the masters to come. The master must take care that the valet was not merely a disguised apprentice, that he had enough clothes to appear presentable and not by his slovenliness scare noble purchasers away. A master could have as many valets as his business demanded; some were engaged for the day, others for the week, others for a year. The valet, too, was under contract and served for wages. He was to begin work at dawn and to stay till sundown. Hence the working day was sixteen hours in summer and eight in winter. If night work was demanded, he could not refuse in consideration of an increase in wages.

M. Levasseur thinks it doubtful whether in a city like Paris there were more workmen than masters. In fact, many masters

worked outside, as if they were mere journeymen. There was often anything but harmony between the masters and their valets. Higher wages were demanded, and the authorities had cause for complaint in the riotous proceedings of valets—proceedings in which sometimes the masters joined when wishing to protest against taxes injurious to their trade. The system of restrictions to industry, however natural at first, by degrees became hurtful and caused turbulent scenes wherever enterprise was most vigorous or chances for improvement were best.

The master was often enjoined not to employ any workman who had not sworn fealty to the corporation. On the other hand, to become master was a matter not only of having learned the trade, but of having also the necessary means with which to pay the expected dues to the lord in case the trade was not free and the town was not a commune, to the corporation as admission fee, and to each member as a treat. Even so a master was often not admitted until a



year had elapsed, during which he had proved his competency. Once admitted, he could not be deprived of his rights (except for grave misdemeanor and upon the judgment of his peers), and his rights were transferred to his widow, who might continue her husband's trade even after marrying a second time and marrying a man who was a stranger to the trade.

The rules issued in regard to quantity and quality, weight, measure, and manner of production had but the general good in view and expressed the desire to secure the best products, and hence a permanent hold on trade. In the first place, everything must be done in broad daylight and in the front part of the shop, so as to be open to inspection by the passers-by. Hence the objection to night work, which also had its dangers in a densely built town. To see that these rules were carried out, inspectors made sudden visits to the workshops or were asked by the manufacturer to test his work. In case of woven goods the inspectors applied the iron rule to see that the

width was as prescribed. Whatever was below standard was seized and confiscated, and the defaulter paid a fine. The latter was not very high, but worse than the fine was the probable loss of credit and the possible loss of profession. If wares were good, they were marked; and each artisan, each corporation and city, had a special seal. With the limited resources at hand, it seems almost impossible for anyone to gain more than the most paltry advantage from falsification; but the rules were evidently imperfectly observed, and fraud was frequent. Credulity was the chief weakness of the age, and buyers were constantly imposed on. Hence old ordinances and statutes were superseded by new and more stringent ones. But the chief motive in it all was the secret fear of competition from within and without. An artisan was often forbidden to finish elsewhere what he had begun at home. On the other side, it is often difficult to determine the limits of one trade as distinct from another. As a result there was constant friction between related professions,

as M. Levasseur illustrates profusely, and the courts were kept busy deciding upon differences. Duplication of a trade was strenuously resisted; as, e.g., when in the thirteenth century the Templars in Paris asked to have a butcher's shop of their own—which request, by the way, was granted—the guild of butchers remonstrated and finally acquired the supervision, as if the new establishment were but a branch store. The powerful organization just mentioned was governed by a master-butcher, elected for life. If he died, a council of four carried on the business until the end of the month. Then the members came together and appointed twelve electors, who chose the new master. The master judged in all matters concerning the profession. Appeals from him went directly to the *prevôt*. He had one-third of all fines as his emolument, and one of the three keys to the corporation's strong box containing the seal and the charters was in his hands; the other two were in the possession of the *prevôt* and the council respectively. The coun-

cil had the management of funds, and gave every year an account as they quitted their charge. Three times a week the master and the council, under the presidency of the royal judge, sāt in judgment upon all differences arising within the corporation. Besides these four assessors (as they might be called), there were three flayers who acted as secretaries or ushers. New members were initiated with much ceremony and a feast was given in their honor, or rather given by them in honor of the corporation. Still M. Levasseur does not wish us to think that every artisan or every tradesman was enrolled in a corporation. In the country plenty of artisans, free and unfree, manufactured and sold and exercised all necessary prerogatives under the general supervision of the law. Many were agriculturists and artisans at the same time. Even in the cities there were many branches of industry which lacked corporative organization, and in the thirteenth century there were still cities which had no guilds whatever. But the tendency of the

age was toward consolidation of intèrests, and the corporative movement became more universal as the centuries progressed.

One large corporation remains to be considered, the Parisian Hansa—an association to which was given the monopoly of navigation on the Seine, at least as far as Nantes, and which dealt particularly in the wines of Burgundy. No boat could pass this stretch without the corporation's permission; and the trade between two of the richest provinces in France, Normandy and Burgundy, was thus in its hands. The Hansa within its field was almost sovereign; it could treat with the neighboring lords as with an equal, levy imposts on boats carrying loads to and from Paris. Besides this, the king, in consideration of a yearly tribute, granted it the right to supervise weight and measure within the town—a privilege which the Hansa gradually extended to the domain of other lords as well, thus coming to have the position almost of crown officials. The corporation was governed by four aldermen and a *prevôt*, called the master of merchants.

From this board of administrators rose later the municipal council of the city. Soon the Hansa intervened in municipal affairs. In the thirteenth century it imposed a tax on the inhabitants for maintaining the pavement, and otherwise had its say in regard to the construction of bridges and building of baths. By degrees the administration of the city under the presidency of the king's *prevôt* came into its hands, and the seal of Paris is almost identical with the seal of the corporation. There were other Hansas to which other parts of the navigation of the Seine was given, such as the one at Rouen; but in the struggle between the two the Parisian Hansa got the lion's share of the king's favor, largely because of the uncertain temper of the people of Normandy and the king's interest in the loyalty of the capital.

In order to understand the difficulties under which mediaeval trade labored and which crippled its efforts, it is worth while studying the subject of taxation. The latter divides itself into taxes on persons and

taxes on goods. No city, not even the commune, was entirely free from either; in fact, it must be supposed that in a certain sense taxation was more exorbitant in the self-governing city than elsewhere, inasmuch as its expenses were increased by the necessity of maintaining a more efficient militia and a more complete administration. Among the personal taxes the inevitable *taille*, which is often ground tax, poll tax, and tax on movables combined, comes first. As a rule, all men were without exception subject to this tax. In case of the commune the burghers were sometimes relieved; but often the tax was levied in a lump sum by means of direct and indirect imposts. Besides the *taille*, which was looked upon as an inevitable evil, during the crusades the townpeople had to give one-tenth of their property for fitting out the king, or aid was asked from each burgher according to his means. The frequent distress of the royal treasury caused demands for extraordinary contributions (such as a denar [0.36 franc] per pound of sales), which weighed heavily on



both property and labor. Large cities bought themselves free by a large sum once for all, but not every city could afford this show of wealth. The assessment of taxes seems to have been by sections or parishes; the sum raised in one year is estimated at more than 75 million francs. Another tax was the yearly payment with which a merchant or artisan bought himself free from service which in earlier times belonged to his profession and which in default of money the lord's bailiff or the king's *prevôt* might impose anew. But even with these larger contributions, smaller dues remained which were relics of old custom, and were insisted on whenever it was convenient or imperative to raise money. More galling and disturbing even than the personal taxes was the taxation of goods. Circulation was vitally hampered by the numerous imposts on transportation and sales. The entrance to a town was gained only upon payment of duty according to value and quantity of goods. Only one's personal belongings were exempt, or what was bought in Saturday's

market. In Paris there was a small export tax on wine bought in the city. Pike money was levied on all carts or horses passing over the road. Sometimes the regulations asked for other things than money. The juggler should sing a song, the mountebank make his monkey dance, and the like. Everyone would have to give something to be let out or admitted. Where the right of way was divided between different lords, commerce was subject to serious dangers. Each toll collector would arrest the transport and demand his due without regard to circumstances, and the merchant would see his goods disappear or spoil before he could reach his destination. Often the merchant was compelled to take the longest route rather than the more direct in order that the toll collector might conveniently make his collection. The result of such vexation and delay was that merchants banded together and offered a fixed sum in money rather than payment in kind. Imposts on sales were exacted in the vender's shop and interfered particularly with the sale of agricul-

tural products. In Paris booths were erected by the king in a convenient place for the sale of fish and other necessities, and often the merchants were obliged to close their shops on Saturdays and move their wares to the booths, for the use of which the king naturally asked a compensation. The right of fair was an uncommonly profitable one for whosoever possessed it, king, lord, or commune, a rent being asked from every vender of marketable products. Mills, ovens, furnaces, and other public conveniences within the city were also as a rule in the possession of someone who could compel the burghers to use them for his benefit. Probably the danger of fire justified the maintenance of but one or two ovens within a city, but finally each burgher was permitted to have an oven of his own. The exclusive right of some lord to the measure and weight employed also hampered commerce. All sales had to be performed either in his presence or in the presence of his agent. The delay, trouble, and petty annoyance caused can more easily be imagined

than told. Some lords were still able to enforce the old right to postpone all sales of grain and wine until their own crop was profitably disposed of; also the right to be lodged and boarded whenever it was their pleasure to visit the town. But heaviest of all to the burgher was the duty to serve the lord in war forty days at his own expense. Many corporations succeeded in throwing off the burden; others remained too closely allied to the lord's interests to buy themselves free. Their larger dependence brought them some advantage in making them sole providers of food, clothing, and furniture to a bishop's or count's numerous household.

The question of coinage, which is an exceedingly important one in mediaeval history, M. Levasseur treats fully. Coinage, which had been a royal prerogative under the Carolingians, became a seignorial right under feudalism. The names "pound," "sou," and "denar" continued to be used, but in course of time the pound weighed became wholly different from the pound

coined. Charles the Great had introduced the silver standard instead of the Roman gold standard, and had decreed that a pound silver should contain 20 sous. As the lords usurped the right of coinage, the quantity of silver was reduced so as to increase their profits. The kings did as the lords, and, where royal power grew, royal coinage drove the seignorial out of circulation. At the end of the eleventh century royal money tallied no longer with the Carolingian pound, but with the mark, which weighed but half a pound, and the coined pound lost all relation to the weighed. The denar, which was originally a silver coin, now contained more copper than silver; and the pound, which once was equivalent to 240 denars (86.40 francs), had silver enough to be worth only 27 francs, and later even only 21.18 francs. New coins, a gold piece and a silver coin (the big tournois), with a couple of smaller coins came into circulation and increased the confusion. St. Louis, who had learned at least one thing from his contact with eastern civilization, wrought a change. Henceforth

the mark was worth 58 tournois, and the latter became the principal coin. One pound tournois henceforth contained twenty of these coins. The gold piece just mentioned was worth about one-half of a pound silver, the difference between the two metals being 10:1, or, according to others, 12:1. The good money of King Louis was established in March, 1262, and the king struck a deadly blow at seignorial coinage by decreeing that his money should be legal tender everywhere, while the seignorial coins were good only as far as the lord's jurisdiction extended. The money of St. Louis remained intact for some thirty years, until Philip the Fair, in his anxiety for revenue, began to tamper with it. He decreed a higher nominal value to some coins than by right of weight and grain they should have, and reduced the weight of others without lowering their worth, until the legal value of the gold coin was doubled as compared with its real, and the value of silver coins had really fallen by half. The clamor for good money was so great that the king had

to submit, but, instead of withdrawing the debased money, he let it circulate side by side with the good, creating endless trouble, especially in dealings where the debtor insisted on offering debased money on the strength of the king's command that his currency be accepted as legal. That commerce was not more profoundly disturbed was probably due to the fact that coins being without indication of value, were, according to old practice, weighed rather than counted, and in buying and selling the public became accustomed to receive and make payment only with scales and touchstone close at hand. But even so, much embarrassment and injustice were the result of this fraudulent policy.

No doubt the most difficult point to settle is the question of prices. M. Levasseur's statements, based largely on the researches of M. d'Avenel, suggest that the commodities, such as food, as compared with the wages paid were less dear than now, while manufactured articles, such as clothing, naturally came very high. Of highest interest



is the table wherein M. d'Avenel has attempted to show how the average price of wheat and rye from 1201 to 1890, as counted by periods of twenty-five years, has almost steadily risen to five and six times its former cost (wheat from 1.80 to 20 francs and rye from 1.90 to 12 francs). Another price list, quoting prices and revenue of land from 1200 to 1400, shows, on the other side, a steady reduction, largely because of war. In still another price list, showing variation of food prices during twenty-five years, the century, or part of it to which the twenty-five years belong, is not given, which essentially diminishes the value of the quotation.<sup>1</sup> But such as it is we reproduce it here:

## 1201-25 OR 1301-25?

Peas and beans per hectoliter (gall. 26.4) Fr.	4.52-11.42
Price of ox, per head . . . . .	20.00-52.00
Price of sheep, per head . . . . .	3.00- 4.50
Price of pig, per head . . . . .	6.00-12.00
Price of wine, per hectoliter . . . . .	5.12-25.56
Price of chicken, apiece . . . . .	0.32- 0.50

<sup>1</sup> In the price lists, as taken from M. d'Avenel, it is often difficult to say what the author intends to be the standard of value, the pound (mediaeval) or the franc (modern).

Price of goose . . . . .	Fr. 0.54- 0.74
Price of rabbit . . . . .	0.71- 1.67
Price of carp . . . . .	0.80- 1.30
Price of eggs, per dozen . . . . .	0.11- 0.12
Price of butter, per kilogram (2.2 pounds) . . . . .	0.43- 0.65

M. Levasseur takes considerable pleasure in giving us an idea of the mediaeval city during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. No bulletins or placards informed the public of where and what things were for sale, but instead there were signs and signboards, each of which tried to be as telling as possible. And where the merchant found these not expressive enough he employed criers, who advertised his wares from sunrise to sundown. What wares he did not thus dispose of he sent his valet out to sell on the street. The thoroughfares were full of boys and women selling vegetables, fruit, and cheese. In Paris the fruit-sellers had their chief stand on the left border of the Seine, and from their stores the poor student eked out his meager meal. On every corner were pastry-sellers who offered muffins and waffles to be eaten on the spot. Of course, only the small trader, the plebeian among the

merchants, indulged in this traffic. The greater number of dealers had their shops and stayed there. Dealers in the same article usually drew together and occupied whole streets and quarters of their own. Often the goods were piled high outside, thus obstructing the passage in the narrow and crowded streets. The houses were high but narrow, with scarcely more than three windows to the front, and overlapping upper stories, huddled together, often so completely shutting out air and light from the street that the sun never reached the bottom of the dark and damp thoroughfare. But the half-light which perpetually reigned was not altogether displeasing to the tradesman, who had his little shop even more obscured by blinds or remnants for sale. The darkness helped to hide the inferiority of his goods. If to this be added the lack of pavement, the gutter running through the middle, people, pigs, and cattle thronging the narrow passage where a horseman could scarcely turn, one has a picturesque idea of the confusion of a mediaeval town, not

unlike the scenes near the bazaars in Constantinople.

The importance of commerce in more than one way dawned on the king and most of the great barons, and they took pains to protect merchants on the road. The king's officers and vassals had strict command to defend travelers, and were held responsible if on the king's territory such were insulted or abused. But in spite of this precaution, the traveler who was bold enough to pass the night in the open, instead of where he ought to be, within the walls of a city, was indeed looked upon as having invited his own disaster. The cities on their part tried to strengthen commerce and the confidence of merchants by giving creditors extensive privileges for recovering debts. In some provinces the creditors could send people to the debtor's house to remain there until he became submissive. In some cities people from another city, or even country, were considered responsible for debts incurred by their compatriots. Thus a citizen from Bordeaux might easily be thrown in prison

and deprived of all he had in order that the claims of a creditor on some other citizen, with which perchance the last comer had no connection, might be satisfied. This precaution naturally would prevent rather than encourage intercourse between distant cities and countries, but it was the outcome of the necessity for self-protection in the absence of commercial treaties or a strong central government. Such seizures would most likely take place at the great fairs, where people from far and near met. M. Levasseur discusses these fairs at some length. The fairs of Paris and of the south, which first attracted commerce on a large scale, were in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries superseded by the great fairs of Flanders and of Champagne. To these assembled not merely merchants from half of Europe, but dealers in goods from India, Alexandria, Damascus, Venice, Spain, and the Levant, transported over the old trade routes and by the ships of the German Hansa. Money was borrowed and exchanged at exorbitant interest, but stringent laws protected the

unsuspecting trader from being defrauded. The courts of Champagne prided themselves on giving every liberty to commerce, but also on keeping a most efficient guard over everyone's rights. The chain of fairs stretched from the English Channel to the Mediterranean. But the selfish policy of Philip the Fair severed the link which bound the fairs of the east of France to those of the north. His wars with Flanders broke the connection with the sea route of the north; Germans and Italians abandoned the route along the Rhone and Saone and sought the English Channel instead, and the fairs as international meeting-places sank into oblivion; what trade was left was of entirely local character. Not fully fifty years served to bring about this complete change.

The brisk trade naturally led to the establishment of banking-houses with facilities for large loans on interest, such as had not been known before. The church forbade taking interest, but the demands of the trade and the risks incurred led to frequent

violation of these rules. The kings confined themselves to prescribing the maximum of interest, and even this was enough to be honored with the name usury. Forty-three per cent under Philip Augustus was reduced to 20 per cent under Philip the Fair, showing the scarcity of money; and at the fairs of Champagne both 30 and 15 per cent per year were demanded, to be paid in weekly instalments whenever practicable. The unclean trade of lending money was pursued not only by the Jews, but by the Italian bankers, and the religious orders lent money quite openly, particularly the Templars, whose fortress-like convents served as safety vaults for the treasures of even the crown. The narrow policy of Philip the Fair in destroying the Templars, persecuting the Lombards, and driving the Jews out of the kingdom fatally injured the money trade.

The *taille*, as paid by artisans in Paris toward the end of the thirteenth century, averaged from 1 pound to 12 denar silver, or from 15 francs to 1 franc. The question how taxation compared with wages earned



M. Levasseur finds almost impossible to answer, because of the scarcity of information offered by the documents and also because of the difficulty of establishing even approximately the purchasing power of money in circulation. Although one gram (fifteen grains) of silver would buy probably four and one-half times as much food as today, or be considered four times as high wages as nowadays, it would certainly buy less of other products, such as iron, steel, or clothing. Besides, wages varied according to place, occupation, and the position of the workman. While a master carpenter might get an equivalent of 2.67 francs a day, an apprentice received only 0.63 franc; and a master in Paris naturally received four times as much as an apprentice in Artois. M. Levasseur ventures the hypothesis that the average wage of a workman toward the end of the thirteenth century was about 1 franc a day, and the wages of an apprentice only one-third of this, the day laborer in the country receiving still less. With this income the artisan is

supposed to have been able to buy nine quarts of grain and four pounds of meat, which is more than he could purchase with the same money nowadays, while for the same wages he could buy more necessities of another kind now than he could at that time. Moreover, the large number of holidays (more than one hundred in the year) interfered with his earnings, and the increase in price of grain must have caused considerable distress, which, with the proverbial lack of providence among the working classes, brought its natural result in crime.

While the previous centuries had on the whole been prosperous times for the cities, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were full of hardships, increase of taxes, and systematic attack on their privileges by the new dynasty. The Capetians had made common cause with the burghers against the baronage. The house of Valois reversed this policy and, seeking its chief support in the nobles, tried to diminish the power of

the towns. The ostensible excuse for this was the constant emptiness of the treasury. Philip the Fair had created a royal administration. In order to make it work, money was needed and, since nothing was to be gotten from the nobility, the trades alone would have to furnish the funds.

The new taxes were collected from sales and, with the tax on chimneys and the salt tax, constituted a regular source of income never to be quite abandoned. The royal collectors, however, in the general disorder were imperfectly supervised, and enriched themselves instead of the crown. Philip of Valois and his son tampered with the money, determined arbitrarily the price of goods and height of wages, and abolished loans on interest, interfering thus with the conditions of trade to satisfy the higher classes. The ordinance of 1351 tried to do away with the monopoly of corporations by allowing masters and workmen of all professions to take as many apprentices as they wished and each apprentice to set up for himself after only two years' apprenticeship. But

even royal determination could not change economic conditions, and other ordinances showed the powerlessness of royalty to interfere in matters of wages. The rest of the history of France during the One Hundred Years' War is but a sorry motley of blunders and exactions, pillage of the treasury, carnage, and pestilence. The States-General tried to protest, but the necessities of war made the king win in the end. The sieges, the marching and pauses of armies, the civil disorders, and the ravages of famine and pestilence, even more than the battles, must have caused a high average of mortality. As Froissart coolly puts it: one-third of the people died. The immediate result was reduction in price of land. One author has counted the drop in value of one hectare field land in Normandy to have been from 364 francs during the first twenty-five years of the fourteenth century to 53 francs in 1451-75; while in Burgundy, which had been spared the terrors of warfare, the price was still 99 francs. As for commerce, strangers had almost ceased to visit the country.

Paris, which was supposed to have had 200,000 inhabitants, had at the restoration of peace 24,000 houses standing empty. In the country the desolation was even greater; boroughs which had had eighty chimneys had only thirty. On the seignorial estates three or four domains were often made one because there was no one left to cultivate them.

With the return of peace energy returned. The king established a standing army. Merchants again crossed the country in safety. The people had to pay for this bringing of order out of confusion, but at least their paying brought benefit to themselves. In the cities the corporations resumed their old importance and authority. Statute upon statute confirmed their privileges, granted immunities and freedom from tolls. Charles VII was particularly anxious to revive the fairs, and to this end signed treaties with foreign powers. Louis XI introduced silk manufacturing and further encouraged commerce. But even so, in 1484, after many years of peaceful industry,

the States-General raised their voice in bitter complaint against the constant increase of taxation and drew a fearful picture of the desolation of the country where the war had raged. And there is no doubt that, with all encouragement given the trades, the burden of taxes grew heavier, and that instead of the periodical plunderings reverted to before had come a systematic draining of the chief channels of wealth such as only a people with the elastic spirit of the French could bear without desperation.

Under royal protection and administration the corporations underwent many changes so as to conform to the king's idea of order and good government. The commune had made itself odious in his eyes and was everywhere suppressed, but the burghers were in most cases allowed civil liberty and even the semblance of political rights. The corporations were multiplied and stricter rules applied, on the supposition that frauds were too frequent. The condition of the apprentices was much the same

as before, but on the one who wished to become master the law imposed long and costly labor in order that he might have a satisfactory piece of skilful workmanship to show for his training. The work completed and the masterpiece produced, the jury passed on its merits and issued a certificate of approval, without which no workman could open a shop of his own. The masterpiece remained the property of the corporation; if the artisan wished to keep it himself, he had to buy it back for hard cash.

From olden time, and as a continuation of the guild in its purely social aspect, another form of association existed—the fraternity, which was destined to play a great part in future municipal life. The fraternity comprised the members of one or more corporations, was placed under the protection of some saint, and was intended for mutual assistance. After the war it grew in importance, and appealed to the man and the Christian, whereas the corporation appealed to the craftsman and the citizen. The fraternity was concerned with the happiness



of its members, implored aid in time of distress, and tried to make one family of them all—an object it achieved but imperfectly. It also did certain pious deeds, such as reciting prayers, and, what was more to the point, helping hospitals and charitable institutions do their work. Thus bread and clothing were distributed to beggars and beds paid for in the sick wards. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were times of much display of wealth, but also of much misery. The fraternities tried to do justice to both sides of municipal life. The paraphernalia employed in divine service were of the costliest; banners and feasts and processions on holidays took time and demanded money. At the same time the close relation of members hardly let distress go unnoticed. Poor and old members were often given the wages of a whole day for their maintenance. Members when entertaining contributed a fixed sum, strangers coming to town were asked to give their share, and even the dead were not exempt, a portion of the estate being set aside for

this purpose. Fines were multiplied. Failure to appear without good excuse at a procession, wedding, or other occasion caused a fine to be imposed, as well as working on holidays or overtime. The budget of one of these fraternities for the year 1750 shows receipts for more than a million francs. Hence the fraternity was one of the most important institutions of the city.

While the fraternity represented the aristocratic side of mediaeval industrial life, the union of masters rather than the union of workmen pure and simple, the *compagnonage* or partnership, as it was called, presented the more universal and democratic. While the fraternity hardly went beyond the walls of the city, the labor unions of that time comprised workmen everywhere, and even went abroad to welcome the journeyman in a strange country. The valet, who now also bore the name *comrade* or companion, lived more apart from his master than before. He still worked side by side with him, and often lodged and boarded

in his house, but their associations were not the same. The workman might have to occupy his inferior position for years; as a member of a fraternity he scarcely had any showing, being neither well off nor independent. Hence it is not strange that with his particular interests he sought to create for himself relations of a different kind. When satisfied that in one place he had learned what he wanted, he became a journeyman in earnest and enlarged his knowledge somewhere else. The greater a necessity travel was, the more valuable it was to have friends somewhere else; and a secret brotherhood came into existence which comprised a large area and was very far from being exclusive. The initiation into the brotherhood was quaint and with an attempt at solemnity. The members had their "mother"—the tavern where they assembled—and here a special room was theirs in which each piece of furniture had a symbolic meaning. After being pledged to secrecy, the newcomer was given a new name, which he bore as member of the asso-

ciation only. When he left town he was accompanied by his comrades to the first crossroad, where a glass was broken in memory of the martyrdom of St. Stephen, and the traveler bade farewell to his friends in the following words: "Comrades, I take leave of you, as the apostles took leave of the Lord, when he sent them to preach the gospel; give me your blessing and I will give you mine."

Each trade had its mysteries. The church, which saw a parody on her usages in these ceremonies, condemned the trade unions, but without effect; the necessity was too great. They were in truth associations for mutual assistance, not less useful than the fraternity. A journeyman arriving in a strange place, instead of being a victim of isolation and danger, met friends and protectors. The union threw down all barriers before him, and he met help where before he would have met resistance. All members lent him their arm, purse, and advice, and divided the work in brotherly fashion between themselves and him. His

first resort was the tavern, the "mother," where, as soon as he had made himself known by some mysterious sign, he was received as an old acquaintance and had a right to share in warmth, bed, and board. It made small difference if he was without money; he was housed until he found work; money was lent him if he needed it, and if he was ill he was taken care of. The "mother" lost nothing; as soon as the new-comer found work the advance was returned. Work was not wanting, but if no other way would do, the rule was insisted on that the earliest comer should cede his place to the latest. Everyone should make a tour of France some time and work in the principal cities. Often two went together for mutual help and pleasure. When arriving at a new place the one just visited was discussed, the places where work was plenty were mentioned; and how fast news traveled is best seen in the fact that no sooner was a great enterprise decided upon in a city than the workmen came flocking from everywhere. But cities were also often tabooed in this

way; if work was bad or masters exacting, or a sufficient number of workers already employed, this news soon spread abroad.

The secret associations also had their drawbacks, however. The secrecy was made too much of; the meetings led to debauchery; riots and violence were sometimes the outcome of reunions, while the constant expense and the burdening of provident members for the benefit of the slovenly and improvident became nuisances. Besides, the trade union was exclusive of others and jealous, trying to unite all under its sway and exercising a tyrannical pressure on those who refused to join. Members of one society entertained ill feeling toward the members of another, and associations such as the fraternity and the trade union could not exist without quarrels and open fights. The result was that the *compagnonage* forbade its members to work for the masters, who on their side appealed to the authorities to interfere.

Still another association of even more international character remains to be re-

corded. It consisted of traveling merchants or peddlers, who for mutual assistance formed a brotherhood, with an officer at the head called the "king of peddlers." There was such a king in Paris for the north of France, another in Languedoc for the south. These kings issued letters which served as passports, and gave the bearer the freedom of every market in Europe. The king had the superior management of the commerce of his province. On market days no salesman could open a bale of goods until the king had visited his booth. The king had his court of jurisdiction, where matters pertaining to commerce were judged. If a peddler on the journey was despoiled and brought complaint to his king, he was almost sure of prompt redress. This association was composed of rich peddlers, who called themselves knights, and delighted in displaying their power and wealth. It demanded heavy contributions from its members, and was not seldom guilty of oppression; hence it ceased to wield any influence as soon as the general government



was strong enough to undertake effectively to maintain law and order.

One of the sources of communal liberty, as well as of constant inconvenience, was the conflict between rivaling powers in regard to jurisdiction over the city. Many claimed the right of prosecution and judgment: the episcopacy, the king's and the lord's bailiff respectively, the chapter, the monastery; last, but not least, the city council itself. Each and all demanded the right of inspection of trade, and the agreement, sometimes effected, that all join without prejudice, simply made matters worse. Finally the king, as the strongest, usurped the entire authority, largely on the plea of having a more general and less selfish interest in the welfare of all his subjects. Particularly in regard to police and sanitation his administration proved a distinct improvement. The tramping of narrow thoroughfares by droves of pigs, the negligence of butchers in making their slaughter-pens a hot-house of pestilential smells and infection, the destruction of garbage, and

the paving of streets were the subjects of repeated ordinances.

The attempt on the part of the Valois to reduce money and determine prices has already been referred to. The first Valois especially thought they could do what they pleased with the coinage. During 1337-42 the value of the pound silver shrank from 17.37 to 3.37 francs, and in gold the change was equally great (19.38 to 4.72 francs). New money was coined having a nominal value far beyond its actual, and the foreign merchants accordingly ceased to trade, while the French, ruined by these alterations, went elsewhere. Even Charles V knew no better, and in 1360 the pound silver was worth only 0.41 franc. As a result, every commodity rose to an impossible height, and the common people had to starve. Even the king finally saw the folly of this and the impossibility of continuing. During the reign of John the value of a mark silver had changed eighty-six times and the mark gold eighteen times, and people's ideas about values became wholly confused. The

law of a maximum price was especially brought to bear on bread. Naturally, since bread was the staple of life, its price and quality were more than a matter of mere money. Today the governments of Europe try to establish an even weight of bread; in the fourteenth century weight might change, but price should not, thus inflicting hardships on the bakers without helping the populace. During the Hundred Years' War famines made prices soar, and made it impossible for the government to maintain its regulations. At other times the harvests were good, but the general condition was such that only locally could the king enforce his will. The prices, as quoted by M. Levasseur, help a little in estimating the value of grain and the cheapness of bread. In 1351-75, he assures us, a hectoliter cost 9 francs, while one hundred years later it cost only 3.75 francs. The greater portion of merchandise followed the same rule. But with debased money, which means scarcely any money, how did the common people in the large cities, let alone the

country population, obtain their daily bread?

The fifteenth century witnessed a great increase in the general activity and wealth of the cities. M. Levasseur quotes rather surprising figures in regard to the average income of the well-to-do tradesmen. The habitual idea of a mediaeval city as the home of squalor and poverty is forcibly refuted when M. Levasseur calculates how the wealthy citizen, the "knight of the nation of Rheims," had a yearly income of 48,000 francs. Drapers, furriers, and spice-dealers got from their trade 6,000 to 9,000 francs a year. A rich butcher with three stalls had a weekly sale of 1,600 francs or more, and the total of his property amounted to 96,000 francs, if not more, since M. Levasseur thinks the social power of money then was much greater than now. Hence artisans in ordinary circumstances enjoyed the possession of some means, and could marry their sons and daughters profitably. Life was simple, demands were not great, and the well-known thriftiness of the French

was probably not less even then. The humbler workmen received their board; hence their wages, even if small, were extra. The country laborer received 0.45 franc a day if boarded, and 0.90 franc if not. The list of wages covering two hundred years is very interesting. It shows, if anything, a remarkable stability in wages throughout.

In spite of increasing wealth, the number of beggars was fearful. Kings and cities tried to prevent vagabondage, and nourished the sick and feeble. Poor strangers were refused entrance. Many refused to work because of too long idleness. To start these in again, shops were erected and material bought, but the attempt stranded and beggary remained for a long time the sad memory of the past war. France was waiting for new impulses, such as came to her from the Italian expeditions.

## CHAPTER II

### RENAISSANCE AND MODERN PERIODS

M. Levasseur's second volume<sup>1</sup> is, if possible, even more enjoyable and suggestive than the first. Several leading economists called his work, when it appeared in its first edition, a model of accuracy. The present edition deserves this praise even more absolutely. The material on which M. Levasseur bases his presentation of the vicissitudes of industry and the laboring classes is in every respect excellent and amply justifies his views. If the reviewer, while examining the wealth of illustration contained in the first volume, felt compelled to keep in abeyance any dissenting opinion of his, he feels still more so as he penetrates into the contents of the second volume, with its vast storehouse of information and the careful investigation on which it rests. The

<sup>1</sup> E. Levasseur, *Histoire des classes ouvrières et de l'industrie en France avant 1789*. Tome second. Deuxième édition. Paris: Rousseau, 1901. 8vo, pp. 988.

following pages will be, as before, an attempt to give the general reader and the student an idea of the interesting contents of the volume. M. Levasseur in his work goes as much as possible into detail, and repeats himself frequently in an endeavor to be perfectly clear and simple. Our review is but a rapid summary of the most prominent features of this important production, and has sufficiently served its purpose if it induces students to examine the volume for themselves.

When the French crossed the Alps in 1494, M. Levasseur tells us, they found in Italy manners more elegant than theirs, a refinement of civilization unknown to the North. Italy was to them like the discovery of a new world. It was then the richest country in Europe. Lombardy resembled a garden; in the cities large numbers of the inhabitants were busy with industry and trade. Silk goods, gold and silver brocade, glass, faïence, perfumery, and other luxuries were fabricated there. The satins and velvets of Venice and Genoa, the faïence of



Bologna and of Urbino, the jewelry of Florence, Rome, and Venice, the glass blowers of Murano, were all renowned. Italy had become the international market of two worlds, and the general prosperity and the rivalry between the courts had created habits of elegance and a search for the beautiful. The French were dazzled at the sight and became the imitators of the people whom they had set out to conquer. Charles VIII brought back with him wagonloads of tapestry, books, pictures, and statuary which he had taken, besides artisans and artists whom he had induced to come to France and work for him, and some of whom actually remained in France. The expeditions of Louis XII and of Francis I multiplied these relations to Italy. The nobility came to desire a life different from that which they had hitherto enjoyed. Instead of living as before, penned up in their castles and donjons, they now wished for gardens with statuary, fountains, and merry gatherings. The royal court drew the lords by its brilliancy, and set the example in display and

festivities. Luxury made rapid progress. Between the prison-like Plessis-lès-Tours of Louis XI, with its moats and pitfalls, and the sumptuous Field of Gold and the court at Blois there was a revolution in the habits and ideas of the people. In order to keep this splendor going and satisfy the new cravings, the Valois did not spare money. The expenses of the king were 45,000 livres tournois in 1480; in 1556 they were 114,000. And a Venetian ambassador observed that now every workman, every mariner, wanted to have meat on his table like the rich. "Every laborer wants to make his son a gentleman," said Bernard Palissy. Laws were enacted against luxury in dress, but the commoner who earned plenty of money did not hesitate to spend it. Laws could not prevent him. The court set the example in patronizing the arts and the artistic industries. New kinds of wood came into use for furniture and utensils—oak, walnut, and ebony. Silverware was rare except among the richest; the ordinary burgher used copper or tin. The wonderful discovery

of Bernard Palissy raised French faïence to the rank of art. Jewelers, enamelers, and glassblowers produced work of high excellence. Printing-presses, binderies, tapestry, all the noble crafts flourished, largely through the interest taken in them by royalty and those who wished to imitate the munificence of the court. The price of books had decreased astonishingly since the fifteenth century; a Tacitus costing 6 sous, a Virgil 3. But now a bookseller did not hesitate to venture 60,000 francs on an edition of Galienus, nor 186,000 on a Bible glossary in seven volumes. The royal government encouraged commerce, too; fairs were established and protected. Something was done for sanitation. In the cities every houseowner was enjoined to sweep before his own door; it was left to the magistrates to supervise the general cleanliness, and a tax for the purpose was levied on every property-holder; but the age, if fond of display, was not very neat, and the general condition remained much the same as before. Still population had increased, and many

cities were rebuilt and enlarged. Paris had changed since the time when its houses lay in ruins. In 1448 the kings had complained of the loneliness of the capital; in 1558 they were frightened at its growth and forbade the building of new houses in the suburbs. The population was almost 400,000. Inter-course between Italy, Germany, Flanders, and France was reviving; Lyons was the great meeting-place for Italian and French trade, and had a fair share of Flemish and Spanish trade besides. The commerce on the Seine was especially active beyond Rouen and on the Garonne from Bordeaux. On the Mediterranean, Marseilles and other cities traded with the Levant, Egypt, and the coast of Barbary. The alliance between Francis I and the sultan opened the East to French trade; French merchants had shops in Alexandria, Cairo, Beirut, and Tripolis; and the political and economic influence of France was at its height in all the possessions of the Sublime Porte. The commerce in the interior prospered too. The sixteenth century was the most brilliant

epoch of the fairs at Lyons, and Paris was the storehouse of France. The money-changers, who had had less luck since letters of exchange (in imitation of Italian methods) and the suppression of seignorial coinage, in 1555 saw their profession raised to the dignity of a royal office. There were twenty-four exchanges established in Paris, twelve in Rouen, Toulouse, and Lyons, six for places of minor importance, and two for the smallest towns. In reality the king intended thus to establish a financial resource for his own benefit. Banks, too, came into use in France in imitation of Italy; the bankers being at first submitted to the following severe rules: each must be a born or naturalized Frenchman, obtain royal sanction, and deposit 15,000 livres with the treasury. In 1543 Francis I was persuaded to establish a bank at Lyons, where commerce made it imperative. At this time, too, commercial tribunals were formed which passed upon mercantile causes. A judge and four consuls chosen by merchants, and merchants themselves, were to judge

without fees and on the spot differences arising from commercial agreements, and their judgment was final in matters not exceeding 500 livres. The municipal magistrates interfered with the working of the courts largely from jealousy, and the king had finally to take the matter in hand and confirm their right of jurisdiction. Some attempts at protection of native industry against foreign competition mark the period. Duty was levied on Flemish and Spanish imports. In 1540 importation of Italian goods could take place only through Lyons, and of Spanish goods only through Narbonne and Bayonne (showing that some of the latter came by sea). But such signs of prohibitive measures were as yet rare. The kings generally let the merchants buy and sell as suited them. Sully looked upon this as a natural right, and demanded it for agriculture no less than for industry. Henry IV during a famine forbade export of cereals, but at the same time explained that "experience teaches us that freedom of exchange between the subjects of one kingdom and

those of another is one of the principal means of making them happy, rich, and opulent." The ideas about this matter were generally so confused that a speculator was not afraid of asking Charles IX for the sole management of the foreign trade, offering in return the relief of certain domains. The royal council saw no objection to this impossible project, and it might have been carried out had not the protest of the merchants, when asked their opinion, prevented it. "France," said the Venetian ambassador, "produces all things necessary for the subsistence of its inhabitants." In fact, cereals, wine, meat, and fish were plentiful. Wood was dear because the king as proprietor of the greater number of forests took advantage of his monopoly. The soil gave flax, hemp, saffron, and madder. The salt works and the iron mines were numerous and rich. Wool alone yielded a considerable income. Industry put all these resources to use, and commerce supplied the wants and effected the exchange. The commerce with Venice diminished after France began

to manufacture silk. Spices came from Lisbon. Germany and England alone sent a thousand vessels every year to the French ports. Under Henry II two-sixths of all imports came from Italy and the Levant, one-sixth from Spain, another sixth from Germany; the Netherlands, England, and Portugal furnished the rest. The Spaniards and Portuguese exported silver and gold and gained 15 and 20 per cent from the trade, notwithstanding the stern prohibition of export of the precious metals issued by the Spanish kings. In exchange France gave grain, wines, dried fruit, woven goods, salt, and blue and yellow dyes. No trade offered her such advantages as the Spanish, and to Spain her artisans flocked, sure to find employment among the rich but indolent possessors of America. France thus enjoyed a hundred years of continued prosperity from 1498 till the beginning of the religious wars. Then the country was ravaged, the population diminished, manufactures and commerce suffered a setback, and a large percentage of artisans and laborers,



previously self-supporting, came to exist on alms.

After these introductory remarks M. Levasseur proceeds to discuss the monetary revolution during the sixteenth century, which, at first unperceived during the first half of the century, was only too evident during the second half, and profoundly modified industrial and commercial conditions. After the Hundred Years' War prices went far below what they had been for centuries and remained so until the reign of Francis I. Gold and silver were scarce; the value of land rose, however, largely because of the increase in population, but in spite of this grain remained cheaper than it was a hundred years before. America had been discovered, and the influx of precious metals began almost at once. From 1520 to 1544 the American mines produced something like 90,000 kilograms of silver per year (more than 198,360 pounds), much more than Europe had hitherto produced. The equilibrium of values was accordingly destroyed, the precious metals lost, while

other matter, for example, land, rose (as the list of M. d'Avenel shows) to twice its former value, and grain became somewhat more expensive. After the mines of Potosi were discovered the output rose to 300,000 kilograms per year, and matters grew worse. The nobility, whose income consisted in fixed rents, was greatly afflicted, while the commercial classes gained. Many burghers bought land, and since nobility depended on possession of noble estate, they became in their turn founders of nobility. Prices of merchandise rose as well, what had formerly cost 2 francs now costing at least 10. The purchasers began to accuse the sellers of speculating. According to M. Levasseur, the purchasing power of money, at least as concerns the breadstuffs, from 1500 to 1589 is best shown in the prices fetched in the central corn market in Paris, where the average price for the first twenty-five years appeared to be 2 francs per bushel, but rose steadily until in 1600 it was as much as 10 francs. The change in price was not due to any scarcity in the supply of grain, but to the

increasing cheapness of money. The decreasing value of silver given in periods of twenty years is illustrated by an accompanying table (p. 63).<sup>1</sup> The tables and estimates are in fact a very important part of M. Levasseur's book. The author warns us, however, against assuming that because the purchasing power of silver was apparently very much the same then as now (1.4:1 for Paris and 1:1 for the rest of France), one received as much for one's money then as now. Grain then was relatively much more expensive, yet even so, purchasers had been able to buy three times as much from 1451-1500 as they were from 1576-1600. This reduction of value was sufficient to upset a great many fortunes, and the change in coinage which diminished by half the amount of silver in a pound tournois aggravated the situation. At the end of the fifteenth century 11 livres tournois were equal to 1 mark fine silver, 1 pound containing as much silver as is in 4.71 francs nowadays. In 1602 one mark was made to

<sup>1</sup> This<sup>N</sup> and following similar page numbers refer to M. Levasseur's<sup>N</sup> book.

contain 20 pounds, 5 sous, and 4 denars, the pound being equal to only 2.18 francs. If multiplied by the purchasing power which M. d'Avenel has hypothetically assigned to silver (p. 64), the pound for the year 1497 was worth 28.26 francs, and for the year 1602 only 5.45 francs; which means that one could buy five times less of merchandise with 1 pound silver (tournois) in 1600 than in 1500. The value of silver as compared with gold in 1497 was 11.8:1 and 11.9:1 in 1602. The principal gold coin was the gold crown (with the image of the sun over the crown). It was counted equal to 36 sous in 1497 and to 40 sous in 1519. As silver money became depreciated, more silver coins were required to equal the gold coin. The kings tried to interfere by demanding in 1574 that the crown (*écu de soleil*) be counted at 58 sous, and in 1575 at 60 sous. But the command was unheeded, and the crown was pushed to 68 sous. It was finally decided to adopt the gold coin as standard, the crown by edict of 1577 being counted equal to 3 pounds silver. Objections to this radical change caused Henry IV in 1602 to

return to the old method, counting the crown equal to 3 pounds 5 sous, or 11.6:1. The consequences were not unimportant. Land cost five times as much in 1600 as a hundred years before, but the pound silver had only one-half of its former value; besides, silver as purchasing metal was reduced from 6 to  $2\frac{1}{2}$ . Those who in 1500 had been able to buy to the value of what now might be 1,000 francs had at this time with the same income only 200 francs to dispose of, and were accordingly ruined. The increase in salary noticeable at this time was nominal rather than real. A day laborer who from 1501-25 received, as it were, 60 centimes, not counting board, received from 1576-1600 eighteen centimes more, but the purchasing value of his wages was lessened by more than one-third. M. d'Avenel calculates that, while the wages of a day laborer for 250 working days equaled, toward the end of the fifteenth century, the produce of 32 hectares, or 79 acres, and while at the beginning of the sixteenth century the wages were still equal to 46 acres, in 1600 they

represented only 23 acres. Hence the situation of the day laborer was anything but encouraging. Or, to take another example: from 1451-75 a mechanic could buy with his daily wages more than 18 liters of wheat or 26 of rye; from 1501-25 he could still buy more than 14 or 18 liters of one or the other kind; but from 1576-1600 he could buy only 4 liters of wheat or 5 liters of rye. In the sixteenth century the breadstuffs seem to have been the commodities which had increased most in price, while human labor had increased least. M. Levasseur makes some comparisons between demands on life in the sixteenth century and now, and concludes that if life is more expensive now than it was, this is because of the assimilation of certain general wants by all classes, an assimilation which was unknown in the sixteenth century. Hence, although there was less money to go around in 1600, it cost less to live than now, and the progressive dearness of living is shown by the increased cost in 1600 as compared with 1500.

Increase in taxation was the ultimate result of the increase in offices following the

new organization of government, the development of industry, and the depreciation of money. In 1497 the total revenue was 16,306,000 francs; in 1535 the Venetian ambassador, who was always well informed, estimated the royal revenue at 28,750,000 francs; and in 1563 he made it out to be something like 69 million francs. Large cities, such as Paris, Rouen, etc., were free from a portion of the direct taxes, which fell with so much the more weight on the peasantry; but instead the cities were expected to make certain gratuitous gifts to the treasury—gifts which, whether large or small, the Valois expected to grow with the years. These gifts are supposed to have amounted to 455 million francs from the accession of Henry II till the end of the sixteenth century. At the accession of Francis I the *taille* amounted to 9 million francs. In 1597 it was 45 million. The restrictions of commerce in the form of tolls still existed. One hundred toll stations in 1567 interfered with the navigation of the Loire; ten years later they were supposed to have been reduced to only seven,

but M. Levasseur thinks there were many more. The king by his ordinances tried to make the waterways free, but it was beyond his power. An ordinance of 1559 prescribed a space of at least eighteen feet to be left free, probably for the passage of boats making their way to the sea. A list of duties on foreign imports (pp. 84, 85) is very instructive, but too long to be reproduced here. A complete tariff was issued in 1549 comprising wool, woods from the West Indies, leather, tallow, hemp, cotton, oil, wine, peddled goods, metals, woven goods, hides, furs, arms, and edibles, a duty of 4 per cent being charged on the assessed value.

It has already been said that corporations did not exist in every town. The king, however, looked upon the guilds as an element of order, and hand in hand with the extension of royal authority went the authorization and extension of the guilds. It should be supposed that as royal power grew, the less would be the need of using the guilds as a prop and the less would be the desire to join the corporation on the part of the free artisans.



But the opposite seemed to happen; the more industry developed and the more grasping were the privileged artisans, the more anxious the non-privileged seemed to be to enter the combination, and the more hostile the guilds seemed to become to any effort on the part of outsiders to pursue their professions individually or form new associations. With the growth of monopoly the distance between master, companion, and apprentice became wider, and the completion of the masterpiece was made more difficult for those who could not buy themselves free from the test. Certain masters ceased to teach their apprentices, presumably in order to hold them longer in subjection. Young men of means bribed their masters to help them or to overlook their mistakes. The corporations grew more abusive as they grew more restrictive. Masters and companions complained of one another, the masters usually having the better of their inferiors, who were too dependent upon them for their living. Strikes were heard of among the bakers in Paris and the printers both in Paris and Lyons. Long

controversies, the masters and workmen alternately appealing to king and parliament, grew out of such differences, which were never quite patched up and increased the hard feeling. Most noisy was the bakers' strike, where the workmen paraded the streets with sticks and swords, and threatened the masters and even those among themselves who did not participate in their actions or share in their hatred.

The exclusiveness of the guilds was not quite to the government's taste, however. It smacked too much of feudal rights and obstructed the kings' desire for uniform government. The kings on their side made the mistake, usual to arbitrary power, of creating offices for the supervision of the trade and granting letters of mastership within every corporation—a method which, if it worked well in a few cases, did ill in most others, since the desire for creating revenue for the exchequer was more potent than the desire to benefit industry. The kings' hostility toward the fraternities had a better reason, namely, that the banquets and assemblies

caused frequent disorders and expense to the poorer members. But for each fraternity suppressed two new ones sprang up. The society of peddlers was suppressed and remained so. In 1581, under the supposedly worthless Henry III, the government aimed a definite blow at the old order and organized the trades anew by commanding (1) that all artisans within the kingdom have themselves enrolled in corporations; (2) that admission be made easier, so that none be left out owing to mere formalities; (3) that the corporations be placed more directly under the king's government and associations within the guild be suppressed; (4) that an impost be laid on labor for the benefit of the royal government. One sees that the royal strongbox was not forgotten even in the profession of great concern for public prosperity. Other regulations limited the work on the masterpiece to a reasonable time (three months instead of a year). Every artisan enrolled had to swear allegiance to the king. By letters patent three masterships were established free of charge within each corporation, thus enabling

poor artisans to become masters without great expense. The all-important fiscal question received due attention along with the liberal provisions.

With the accession of Henry IV began a new era of paternal government. The religious wars had proved destructive to French industry, which had been in such a fair condition. The League had shown its spirit by pillaging the farms and despoiling the merchants. The cities had not suffered any less even if protected by walls. Manufacture in some cases ceased to exist. As often happens in case of prolonged war, luxury had not ceased even if necessities were wanting; hence, where industry catered to the demands of the rich it had remained intact and even flourished. Thus silks and fine woollens and linen stuffs still commanded sales. Henry set himself resolutely to restore peace and prosperity both in agriculture and in industry. Sully was most interested in restoring well-being to the humble husbandman, while Henry thought industry and commerce the most important sources of a

nation's wealth. It would be too lengthy to repeat the author's discussion of the work of Henry IV and his ministers. Suffice it to say that the king had the needs of the treasury in mind just as much as the welfare of the people. The ordinance of 1597 repeats the commands of the edict of sixteen years before, emphasizing the need of freedom in the narrow circle of economic life within the guilds. In 1601 a commission of seventeen persons was appointed to suggest further what might be done for the advancement of the trades. The commission examined into the statutes of some of the corporations with a view to improving the products. Experiments began with a view to transplanting silk manufacture from the south to Paris, and the king strove to interest private capital in the attempt, but it failed. Other lines of industry, such as weaving of tapestry, were more successful. An attempt to set up looms for weaving of linen in competition with the Dutch was liberally supported by the royal exchequer, yet had no marked result. But the chief enterprise with which the name of Henry IV

is connected is his starting those royal manufactories which were the first attempt at industry on a large scale freed from the narrow supervision of the trades, and which came afterward to be of such importance for French export and influence in European markets. The king's desire was to limit importation to a minimum, and by so doing draw gold and silver into the country, the precious metals alone being considered wealth. But he also wished to save the people from misery by preventing them from being idle. As Richelieu put it more brutally: The people is like a mule; it gets spoiled if left with nothing to do. The king found the corporations obstinately opposed to his plans for the creation of larger establishments. Letters patent gave certain entrepreneurs freedom from the supervision of the trades, but the guilds never ceased to clamor against such breach of their ancient rights. In many of these instances the king had furnished the capital or part of it, or had encouraged the formation of companies. In the Louvre the king gave the lower floors for shops and

lodgings, and although the corporations remonstrated, the king was not to be moved; and the Louvre for almost two hundred years was the cradle of art and artisanship of the highest grade, a reputation which was bitterly envied by the guilds.

The prospect of royal pay and royal favor attracted foreigners, yet these were forced to seek their customers largely outside of France, and thus met foreign competition on its own field. Under Henry IV royal establishments had but middling success, but later ages enjoyed the fruit of the attempt. French industry grew, without reaching, however, the height or prosperity of the Renaissance. The formation of companies for extending trade with the colonies, particularly with the New World, and treaties with foreign countries marked the judicious and far-seeing policy of Henry IV. Under Richelieu these projects were but little favored. Richelieu had too deep an interest in politics to pay full attention to economic matters. The Thirty Years' War without and the machinations of the nobility within naturally

absorbed all his energy. Art had in him a generous patron, but the need of money and the subsequent taxation weighed heavily on the people. Yet he gave them at least just government and security. His regulations of industry had largely the object of counteracting fraud, and his chief undertakings were in regard to furthering communication by multiplying the roads and opening new avenues of commerce. Several rivers were made navigable, bridges and highways were reconstructed, and the postal service began to act regularly. A strong navy protected foreign trade, treaties were concluded, and the colonies were not altogether neglected; but bad luck seemed to pursue French enterprise in America, and only the French settlements in the Antilles gave hope of return in the future. The administration during the minority of Louis XIV failed in many ways to continue the good work begun and was more concerned about present revenue than building for the future. When Louis XIV came to the throne, everything languished. While the names of Henry IV and Richelieu are conspicuous in



French economic history, that of Mazarin has really no place there at all.

Louis XIV, M. Levasseur says, had not only the good fortune of meeting men of excellence and ability, but also knew how to attach them to his service. He owed his greatness partly to the circumstances which preceded his reign, partly to himself, for never has a prince known how to govern with more majesty. And France was ready to submit to an absolute government. She had lost in political liberty, but gained in unity. The man to bring about this unity for the benefit of the nation, as *he* thought, was Colbert. Absolutism had no more devoted servant—a minister at once ambitious and diligent, passionately imbued with a desire for order, brooking no resistance. He was an organizer of monarchy in the works of peace, and for twenty-two years he brought his vigilance and his reforming spirit to bear upon the remotest parts of civil administration. If he committed errors, he rendered at the same time so considerable services to the state that it is easy to pardon his mistakes.

His first and greatest merit is to have created order in the finances by establishing regularity in the imposts. This, while it eased the burden, more than doubled the receipts (32 million francs instead of 13 million as before). In 1661 the revenue rose to 137 million francs, and yearly budgets were made out on which income and expenditure could be easily seen. These were presented to the king for inspection, and were approved by him—a simple remedy, it seems, but where is the simple remedy which has not once upon a time been a great discovery? The clearing away of old abuses left a freer path for justice and in its wake for the peaceful arts. The provinces had been badly administered, the representatives of the king's civil power, the intendants, having been subject to the military governors. By liberating the civil power and placing it directly under the king the intendants became masters of their provinces in all matters concerning police and finance. A constant correspondence kept them informed of the wishes of the king, and their opinion was asked in all affairs which

concerned their province. How deplorable in one way was the loss of provincial and municipal liberty! Yet in another way the people gained by having one rather than many masters. Colbert's plans were indicated in an early letter to Mazarin where he pointed out that it was necessary to re-establish or create anew all the industries, even those which depended upon luxury for their maintenance; that it was necessary to establish a system of protective tariffs, to organize producers and tradespeople into corporations, to alleviate the fiscal burdens which had proved too heavy for the people, to restore a merchant fleet for the transport of French products, to develop the colonies and attach them commercially to the mother-country, to overcome the difficulties in the way of direct connection between France and India, and to develop a navy to protect the merchant fleet.

To make France independent of foreign produce, keep everybody busy, prevent idleness, utilize native products, keep capital within the kingdom, and draw money from abroad—very much the same ideal as Henry IV had tried to realize—and by means of this wealth pay the taxes,

which again were necessary for the support of a strong government—these were the lines along which he proposed to act. A thousand pities that the ambition of Louis XIV ran so entirely at cross-purposes with his! The system of Colbert was based on the all-powerful authority of an absolute monarch, and his system as the weaker part became quickly subservient to and absorbed in the destructive policy of the monarch. To organize the corporations was Colbert's first care—he hoped thus to prevent fraud more easily. To do this in such a way as to further the professions, he revived the old Council of Commerce which Henry IV had called into existence, and sent commissioners to the provinces to consult manufacturers and merchants and discuss the matter with the corporations themselves. The encouragement his plans received Colbert took for an expression of unanimous consent; too often, however, the desire to please the almighty minister had got the better of truth, and the opinion of the workmen seems not to have been heard at all. The protests forwarded to

him he took for an expression of an obstreperous spirit rather than sound advice. In 1669 the famous four ordinances saw the light, which should regulate the manufacture of woolen goods particularly, and in which the obsolete rules for the length and width of a piece, with other minute rules as to selvage, number of threads in the warp, the quality of material to be used, and the mode of manufacture, were revived and extended to comprise all instead of a few kinds of goods. The intention of Colbert was to re-establish the old high reputation of French goods—a generous idea in itself, but ill advised in its present expression, since the manufacturer was sadly handicapped as to the choice and working of his material and the purchaser equally limited as to price and variety. In other ordinances the minister went farther into detail, making them rather instructive reading for the student of today. Every maker and master was to have a copy in his shop and bind himself by signing his name to obey them implicitly. Besides, in order to verify the maker each

product was to have its mark, the weaver attaching his, the dyer his, the owner of the factory his, and the royal inspector his, with the arms and name of the city on one side, on the other the image of the king with this (to us almost ironical) inscription: "Louis XIV, restorer of French manufactures." The penalty for neglect of rules was severe: heavy fines, confiscation, imprisonment, and, if repeated, exhibition of both manufacturer and goods at the pillory—a sad instance of what despotic power may lead to, M. Levasseur reflects.

Colbert was very active, too, in aiding the industries already flourishing and inculcating a more enterprising spirit into the towns, where idleness seemed to him the chief obstacle to the accumulation of riches. He was also the supporter of royal manufactories or such private enterprises as gained their success by selling their products to the state at a set price. Colbert gave freely to all whenever he thought their existence or example a benefit to the nation, and paid good prices when he thought it important to encourage

them. He urged cities and provinces to do as the king did, since large capital was often needed to set on foot anything new. The king even honored some of these establishments by his royal visit and ennobled some of the directors. The royal manufactories were authorized to bear the royal arms over their entrances. The employees enjoyed certain immunities, and above all the special protection of the king. The famous factory of Gobelins, which had been abandoned after the death of Henry IV, but which Colbert had revived, was one of these. The best artists made the drawings not only for tapestry, but for furniture, statuary, and mosaic for the decoration of the royal palaces, and orders were executed for outsiders as well. Lace manufactories were also under royal protection; factories for stockings, worsted and silk, cloth, linen, foundries and forges, soap works, shipbuilding establishments, some of which were new industries, were introduced and subsidized by the government for the help they might give to home enterprise. The title "royal manufactory,"

or the privilege conferred by letters patent to start a new enterprise, was a palladium which sheltered the entrepreneur against suits in court and seizure. Such a factory, if in straits, needed only to appeal to the king, who helped it with his money and his favors. In order to be so assisted it was necessary to have something new to present for consideration—an invention or some fresh project for the benefit of home industry. The manufacturer could henceforth conduct his operations free from the jealous supervision and chicane of the guilds; he could have larger workrooms, more workmen, put more capital into his enterprise, and turn out more work; in fact, attempt industry on a larger scale than if he had been a member of the guild. These privileges were often claimed for enterprises which proved of no particular worth, hence abuse and revolt on the part of the corporations, which were wide-awake critics, watching for the smallest misfortune befalling their rivals. Colbert drew many foreigners to France, but showed himself fiercely jealous of any attempt of foreigners



to draw French industry. His monopolies necessarily thwarted the small industry, and the ill feeling on the part of the workers in the guild was probably well justified. But Colbert looked upon the gain for France to come from the larger industries as more than paying for the loss in other quarters. He kept up a constant correspondence with the directors of the various establishments and did whatever seemed feasible to stimulate their activity. But with all his ardor his system had a grave fault: the will of a single man, however sincere and powerful in its utterance, could not replace the free action and initiation of a nation, and many of his creations perished as soon as he took away his protecting hand. M. Levasseur follows up his discussion of the policy of Colbert with a review of the industries as pursued in the different provinces in the north, south, west, center, and east of France. Whatever the faults of Colbert's system, France appears from this review to have been a genuine beehive. For some of the provinces of the south an estimate of export and import is

reprinted, which gives an exceedingly interesting idea of the activity of this portion of the kingdom. Evidently the merry south was not a lazy south.

It was feared that when Colbert died manufacture in France had seen its best days. And, in fact, Colbert's successors in royal favor cared nothing for industry, but nevertheless continued to establish new factories so as to find occupations and sinecures for their friends. They established them with this difference, however, that instead of making these enterprises state establishments, private individuals were given letters patent and left to themselves. The trade regulations were maintained, and where they were found wanting in strictness and explicitness the intendants supplemented them according to their lights. The Council of Commerce, which had not proved of any particular use during Colbert's administration, was supplemented by chambers of commerce in the principal cities. The presumptuousness or ignorance of the ministers that followed Colbert is partly to be blamed for

the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which was a worthy ending of the unpardonable misgovernment of the last years of Louis XIV's reign. The emigration is set at from 100,000 to 600,000 for the period 1660-75 only, but the exodus lasted till the middle of the eighteenth century, and the grand total is probably not exaggerated. During the last wars, which determined the political position of France, manufacture had a further setback, and bad harvests created great misery. The cities were again flooded with paupers, finances were in their habitual disorder, and a national debt of 6 milliards 193 million francs weighed on the people—the beginning of the end. To fill the lacuna new offices were created—the standard remedy, as futile as it was foolish. As a courtier said to Louis XIV: "As often as it pleases your Majesty to create an office, God straightway creates a fool ready to buy it." M. Levasseur dwells at some length upon these offices, their astonishing number, and their superficial relation to the trades for whose guidance and supervision they were established. Some-

times the corporations escaped the doubtful benefit of royal appointment by paying a lump sum into the treasury and choosing the officer among their own. The sums the treasury received on such occasions approach the boodle of modern times. One city bought itself free for 70,000 francs, another for twice as much, and the corporations ran heavily into debt in order to produce so much money. M. Levasseur gives a long list of offices created during twenty-five years, with the sums which the sales brought. The kings of France were notorious for their bad management, otherwise such sums ought to have permanently relieved the treasury and with the taxes sufficed for all reasonable needs. In fact, M. Levasseur shows that in 1755 in Paris alone there were 2,461 titular offices, and in 1700 in the generality of Orleans there were no less than 7,747 royal and seignorial officials, as compared with only 6,182 merchants, wholesale and retail. The result of such misrule could not but become manifest in the increasing incapacity of a long-suffering population to meet the demands.

No wonder that the French people, informed by historical research of the true nature of the past, has proved unwilling to return to monarchy.

Meanwhile the inner life of the corporations remained very much the same. The apprentice was accused of loafing whenever out of the master's sight. The absence of any definite agreement between master and workman left the condition of the latter rather precarious. The workman might often find himself without food or job, and the master, abandoned at short notice by his workmen, might equally often find it impossible to fulfil his obligations. The statutes sought to counteract this by demanding a week or less during which each party might look around. But the statutes, of course, had not the force of law, and the mutual hostility between masters and companions paralyzed what compelling power the statutes might have had. Better situated and probably more contented was the workman in the large manufactories where labor was of a more divided nature. Here, if the wages

were smaller and the discipline perhaps even stricter, the opportunity for advancement was greater. The privileges of the trade inculcated greater self-respect in the individual, which was of no small importance at a time when the worker in the guild complained of avarice, cruelty, and intolerable pride on the part of the masters. In the larger establishment there was a more secure future before the diligent artisan, and petty tyranny had no such chance as in the small workshop. The disorders caused by strikes and revolts on the part of the trade unions continued; they were a part almost of everyday life; and although the unions were prohibited again and again as a disturbing element, they were too helpful to the workmen themselves as a means of power and control to be ever really abandoned. United resistance gave them a chance in their struggle with the many in authority above them, whereas isolation would have meant their total subjection.

Wages and prices receive M. Levasseur's close attention. He deplores that it is well-

nigh impossible to reach definite results with the material at hand. An examination of his lists of wages for the principal trades from 1601 to 1725 and from 1625 to 1750 seems to show wages, when not stable, to be declining rather than otherwise. The debasement of money by one-half may have had something to do with this. The price of land rose toward the middle of the seventeenth century and declined afterward. Grain rose in the larger portion of France. Hence the laborer was better off than at the time of Henry IV; but, setting aside the peculiar conditions caused by the monetary revolution, M. d'Avenel, to whose calculations of prices and consumption M. Levasseur constantly refers, believes there has been no period when the laborer procured so little food for the amount he had to spend as in the seventeenth century—a fact which speaks curiously for the condition of the laboring classes during this most glorious period of French history. Strange to say, the wages of the laborer increased as the glory of the great king diminished. M.

Levasseur wonders whether the revocation of the Edict of Nantes had anything to do with this. We can only refer the reader to these interesting pages for more complete information (pp. 394 ff.). On the whole, it seems as if expenses had increased in every line for the laboring classes, with no really adequate return from either agriculture, industry, or commerce, the egotistic policy of the government having closed every avenue except those from which a steady stream of coin flowed into that vessel of the Danaïdes, the royal treasury. The corporations, which the government had exerted itself to make permanent, were bowed down under a growing debt and had scarcely the funds with which to pay the interest—a debt which the government itself had brought upon them.

M. Levasseur gives us a short résumé of the transactions of Law and his irredeemable currency. He thinks that the identification of Law's bank with the government as a royal bank was the original cause of its downfall, largely because of the reckless waste



and mad speculation to which such an undertaking would necessarily become subject. The government had never hesitated to rob its subjects by depreciating the currency, and its countenancing the issue of paper money without any adequate amount of gold or silver to back it showed the same sublime foolishness and blind faith in its prerogatives. Law did one thing for which he may sincerely be praised: because he expected to enrich the exchequer in other ways, he could afford to release industry from its bondage, lower duties, and open the frontier to foreign products, as well as abolish hindrances to commerce in the interior. But the dream of wholesale prosperity, miraculously acquired, was short. After three years, during which France was in a mad whirl, the bank suspended its payments, and a stupendous wave of bankruptcy swept away the fortunes of both laymen and ecclesiastics, some of whom had been compelled rather than induced by royal mandate to speculate. Instead of solid fortunes were left heaps of bank bills, both counterfeit and good, which now were not

worth a farthing. Everything was established on its old footing. The corporations and towns were more heavily engaged than before, but those hardest hit were probably the higher orders. The treasury returned to its old practices in order to reimburse itself; heavy sums were again forced from the reluctant cities. The royal inspectors went on their rounds and were paid for going, not by the government, but by the manufacturers, while heavy fines were imposed on those who sought to evade the law. That French industry survived the strait-jacket which was put on to hinder every movement remains a wonder. But the narrowness of economic policy caused the professed aim to be defeated, just as in the days of Roman industrial régime. Some French industries still maintained their supremacy, especially whatever belonged to the realm of art and luxury. Porcelain and faïence were still in demand, and the factory at Sèvres began its famous career under the protection of Mme de Pompadour. Mechanical improvements in spinning and weaving were imitated

in France, and machinery was introduced, although the expense was considered extraordinary. Science and art again put themselves at the service of the crafts, for which the French have such peculiar aptitude. People had to be very industrious and inventive in order to keep away the misery which threatened such large portions of France. Commerce held the same position as industry. Objects of luxury easily found buyers abroad. As for ordinary merchandise, commerce in the eighteenth century was livelier than ever, in spite of the inferior quality of goods. Again a war interfered, the Seven Years' War, and made a reduction in foreign trade from 616 million livres to 322 while the war lasted; but when it was over commerce rose again rapidly to 725 million. In the administration of Fleury, France enjoyed forty years of peace, during which commerce was trebled, but it is also necessary to say that it had been almost ruined during the last war of Louis XIV. The table which is shown on p. 113 may give an idea of the growth.

The chief European countries with which France traded in 1787 were Italy, Switzerland, Genoa, Venice, Naples, and Sardinia, Germany with Austria, Prussia, and Poland, England and her possessions, the Hanseatic

# PROBABLE ANNUAL AVERAGE OF COMMERCE

1716-72

(Numbers indicate millions of livres)

PERIODS	IMPORTATIONS		EXPORTATIONS		TOTAL
	Europe	Other Countries	Europe	Other Countries	
1716-20....	65.1	27.2	106.2	16.3	214.8
1721-32....	80.2	35.6	116.7	31.7	264.2
1733-35....	76.6	46.7	124.4	29.8	277.5
1736-39....	102.0	65.6	143.4	51.0	361.0
1740-48....	112.8	69.8	192.3	46.2	430.1
1749-55....	155.5	120.0	257.2	84.0	616.7
1756-63....	133.7	40.9	110.9	38.0	323.5
1764-76....	165.1	168.2	309.2	82.4	724.9
1777-83....	207.6	138.1	259.8	78.0	683.5
1784-88....	301.7	266.0	354.4	139.5	1061.6

cities, Scandinavia, and Russia. With all these trade had increased since 1716, while trade with Spain had remained stationary; furthermore, Holland, the Ottoman empire, and Barbary, where French commerce held its own against the English. The reason

why it is found difficult to give an accurate statistical estimate of commerce at this period is the peculiar organization of France into belts or zones for the collection of customs. An inner region comprised the five great farming districts surrounded by a line of posts for the levying of duties on export and import, but within which goods circulated more or less free of imposts. Another belt comprised half of Southern France, Franche Comté, and Brittany, the so-called reputed foreign provinces, where certain tariff systems, tolls, and duties flourished unabated; and a third belt comprised the former German provinces Lorraine, Alsace, and the three bishoprics, which might deal freely with foreign countries, but paid duty on export to the other French provinces. If to these be added five free ports situated outside the line of customs and dealing freely with foreign countries, it is easy to see that an attempt to estimate commerce from so many centers functioning separately and independently presents opportunity for statements of approximate rather than absolute

truth. To wish to do away with this confusion and unite France within one boundary met with resistance on the part of the outlying provinces, which enjoyed a profitable trade and only desired free export into France as well. Favorable treaties with England and Russia, and the alliance with the United States, stimulated commerce considerably.

M. Levasseur next discusses the influence of the new ideas as represented by the economists. The demand for industrial liberty, total liberty, *laissez faire*, such as the contact with English political philosophy and the liberal ideas in America might bring forth, met with stern resistance on the part of those who thought the old, tried methods the best and were from nature or habit averse to change. The manufacturers themselves thought that the economists knew not what they were talking of, that they lacked practical experience, and clamored for more rather than less restriction. M. Levasseur reprints among the notes some of the reports, which are by no means unprofitable reading. Another interest just wakening was more

concerned with improving the chances of the grain-growers. To make grain trade free, not only within the boundaries, but also with foreign countries, was the utmost the economists wished for. But the fear of making bread expensive made this object almost impossible, and even a series of good harvests could not persuade the poorer classes that export of grain would not eventually cause famine. The question of the grain trade alone, as one of the vital questions of the time, with the side light it throws on economic and political questions and prejudices, the nation's hopes and fears in a nutshell, as it were, might fill a whole book. Free trade in grain was not consistently attempted until the ministry of Turgot.

This remarkable man—remarkable for his keenness as a thinker, as an advocate of reform, and as an administrator—raised the question of the economic restoration or ruin of France into one of first magnitude, into something which the French people could never again lose sight of and which overshadowed every other. M. Levasseur re-

prints parts of the letter in which Turgot expressed his plea for the king's undivided support in case he was to create order out of chaos. The sad prophecy contained in this letter that the king would ultimately prove untrue to his own best interests has peculiar force to us, suggesting as it does the insignificance to which the king had sunk as compared with the coterie of greedy nobles, the absence of any progressive ideas among the courtiers, and the power which abuse had acquired over justice and even plain patriotism. Like Colbert, Turgot turned his attention to the finances, wherein seemed the root of the evil. In his own words, henceforth there must be "no bankruptcy, no increase of taxation, no loans." Labor must be assisted, not thwarted; freedom of commerce and of industry must set capital a-moving and leave scope for individual initiative; France must have her resources developed, her communications improved; arrears of taxes must be called, the privileged classes paying their share; the court must learn to husband its income. In the six



edicts issued by Turgot which made such a startling impression on the friends of the old order, the *corvée* was abolished, at least as far as royal jurisdiction went; the offices for the supervision of ports, quays, and markets in Paris were abolished as well, corporations and fraternities were done away with, and the exercise of the trades made free to everyone who had conformed to the general police regulations. Other changes were effected by the edicts, but these are the most important. The preface to each set forth the legislators' ideas upon the matter, and was intended to win the people for the new measure by appealing to their sense of fairness and interest in their own well-being. The writer's eloquence, says M. Levasseur, was that of an honest mind. But the edicts nevertheless caused a storm of opposition, which never abated in strength until the king lost courage and let the reformer go. Marie Antoinette, who, at this time at least, had a mind for nothing but the satisfaction of her caprices, chafed at the necessary curtailing of expenses and soon became the new minister's impla-

cable enemy. Louis XVI, who wished to do the right thing, had neither foresight nor firmness to maintain the position once taken, but let himself be alternately bullied and persuaded till contempt rather than respect for his will or his opinion animated most of his advisers. It is strange that an outsider, like Maria Theresa, should regret the dismissal of Turgot more than did the persons most concerned. It is true that Turgot was neither a Richelieu nor a Colbert; he had neither the tact nor the patience necessary to open a new era for France. But, however out of place the man, his ideas have been the seed of a new life for France, and while the monarchy refused his help the Revolution made him its hero. If not a great minister, Turgot was a great man and a good citizen, a patriot of the best kind. A contemporary tersely remarked upon the news of his downfall: "It was an error to give such a position to such a man in a monarchy like ours." The sinister irony was but too true. No sooner was Turgot out of the game than the edicts announcing the liberation of the trades

were annulled, the corporations were re-established, with some exceptions, as they had been before. New edicts followed, reinstating the old methods. Reaction was in full force.

The taxes at the end of the ancient régime were briefly estimated by Necker to amount to 585 million livres. And yet during the war of the American Revolution it was necessary to borrow more than a milliard livres. In 1789 the budget presented by Necker showed an income of 475 millions and an expenditure to the amount of 631.5 millions. The taxes from which this tremendous amount was to be defrayed were, of course, first the *taille*, paid by husbandmen and commoners. A nobleman might have a farm covering considerable plowland without having to pay a penny to the fisc; the great lord might extend his park and his forests without any dues to the treasury. Until the time of Louis XVI the tax collectors had been responsible, body and goods, for the return of the *taille*. Turgot did away with this solidarity, which reminds one of the obligations of the

Roman *curiales*. The collectors, however, did seldom proceed against the taxpayer according to conscience; the heaviest part of the burden was, as a rule, laid on those who had least means of redress. The only way to escape was to appear even more miserable than was really the case. The deceit practiced by the peasants is well known from contemporary literature. The *poll tax* was something everyone, whether common or noble, was expected to pay according to classification of property. But the clergy, the cities, and some of the provinces bought themselves free by a lump sum. The peculiar way in which classification was carried out is shown in Touraine, where the nobles paid 6,000 livres, the privileged classes 6,800, the city population 45,000, while the peasants paid 290,000 livres. In 1781 the income from the poll tax was 41.5 millions (in Paris alone?). The *twentieth*, which had superseded the old tenth, was an emergency tax demanded from all subjects without exception. In 1756 (Seven Years' War) and later a second twentieth was asked for; and from

1760 to 1762 and from 1782 to 1786 a third twentieth was repeatedly demanded. An edict exempted those whose income was less than 3 livres! The clergy usually bought itself free. For a long while the taxes were per annum and assessed individually. Necker did a notable kindness to taxpayers by decreeing that taxes once assessed remained the same for twenty years at a time. Necker in his "Administration of the Finances" informed the States-General that the *roturiers*, the common farmers, bore almost the whole of the *taille*, poll tax, and twentieth, the *taille* being from 81 to 91 million, the poll tax from 22 to 42 million, and the three twentieths from 74 to 76.5 million livres. Direct tax on industry brought little; the population of Paris was largely exempt from it; 2,046 letters of mastership granted in Paris brought the sum of 595,000 livres. Other sources of income were the monopolies, the farming of certain grants not specified, which in 1786 were estimated to turn into the treasury the lump sum of 122.9 million livres or more. The administration of the

domains Necker estimated at 52 millions. Other sources of income were the postal service, which yielded the treasury 10.5 millions, and the lottery, which gave 11.5 millions after having consumed 44 millions in payment to winners. But with a newly acquired debt of a milliard and a half, even such sums as these wrung from the hard-working classes did not suffice. The court continued its drain on the finances, large sums being squandered in a night; and the whole fabric, so honeycombed with abuse, finally tottered to its ruin.

The last chapter in the volume contains the detailed description of the general condition of the trades during this period. The aristocracy among the artisans were the jewelers, who had a coat-of-arms of their own, their own house, and the hierarchy of profession more firmly established than anywhere else. Only the masters had privileges, and among these again there were degrees based on the date when mastership was acquired and the dignities and offices held. Thus there were the young masters, the modern

ones, the old masters, and the old wardens. The last were in the highest sense representatives of the guild, its traditions and aspirations, and the jealous guard it kept on its rights. With the jewelers the road to mastership was even longer and more tortuous than with the other guilds, and each master could not take more than one apprentice, who stayed with him for eight years and longer. The jewelers' guild, however, was even more renowned than the others for its magnificent charities, its distribution of food, care for the old and feeble among its own members, and for its alms. Sums from 10,000 to 11,000 livres were yearly spent in charity, 13,000 on the assemblies, elections, and offices. The six corps of merchants in Paris formed another kind of corporation, less well-to-do, but also less combative. They, too, had their coats-of-arms, and their members had the privilege of being aldermen and mayors of the capital. The other forty-four associations of trades created by the edict of 1776 were reduced from eighty-eight older ones; the right of mastership here cost from 100 to

800 livres, as compared with 600 to 1,000 livres in the six corps—sums which might be increased by the king in case of need. There were also certain parts of Paris where tradesmen were free to pursue their vocation without infringement on the part of the guilds. Here were situated the royal manufactories and other enterprises of private nature. In spite of jealousy on the part of the guilds, the king maintained the immunity of these parts, which comprised, among others, several streets, the neighborhood of some famous churches, the king's palaces, the houses of the princes of royal blood, and the suburb St. Antoine. The opinion of the corporations concerning the necessity of their own existence was not always the same. In their opposition to Turgot's reforms the masters spoke as if the welfare of the country depended on them. But later, when the corporations were restored in 1777, there were many who opined that monopoly helped only to maintain mediocrity. Corporations might be of use in large cities, but in smaller communities they seemed hurtful. Particularly



the question of the mastership caused great difference of opinion, the suburbs of Paris wishing no restriction on the exercise of professions, other cities voting strongly for maintaining the old obligations unimpaired. The small industries were as important as ever. In 1721 Paris had 757 bakers with a population of 500,000 (in 1890, at a time when it was said bakers were too plentiful, there were 1,522 with 2,447,957 inhabitants). In 1767 at Sens there were 21 grocers, 11 clothiers, 24 joiners, 25 shoemakers to supply 6,000 inhabitants (in 1890, with a population almost twice as large, there were 14 grocers, 12 haberdashers, 8 clothiers, 8 joiners, 13 shoemakers). And in the country the small industries were even more important than in the city. At all times the peasants had woven and spun for their own needs. After the edict of 1762 they were free to work for the merchants in town or on their own account. In such provinces as Picardy the peasantry did a fair share of weaving, the manufacture of linen occupying no less than 24,000 looms. In the boroughs many mas-

ters were workmen as well, and often hired out to work for clients, who then furnished the material. In most shops, large or small, work was done by hand; certain industries, however, employed "water or horse power. The spinning machines imported from England had begun to be used in many factories, but on the whole were still a novelty. The contest between machine work and man's hand began as early as Louis XIV, when the machine weaving of knitted goods was restricted to eighteen cities only in order that "bread be not taken away from too many people and the trade ruined by poor work."

Returning to the position of the individual workmen, M. Levasseur states that the condition of an apprentice was not particularly improved as the eighteenth century drew toward its close; in fact, there was a tendency to emphasize his dependence rather than otherwise. He was as before a maid of all work, the errand boy and obedient slavey of the household and the workmen. Entering when ten or eleven, he stayed under the master's tutelage three, five, or seven years,

and the less he paid for his tuition the longer he had to stay. He ate in the kitchen and slept in the shop. Often peasants who wished their son to learn a trade paid in kind rather than in money, and sometimes they boarded him themselves. The apprentice was forbidden to stay away overnight or leave the master before the time was up. The statutes knew no freedom for the workmen either. The distance between the orders was to be preserved. The workmen were forbidden to have tools of their own with which they might work for themselves and compete with their masters, and the masters were always taking pains that the workmen, even others than their own, should not get a job without their knowledge or consent. A workman could not leave with a piece of work unfinished; if he did, he was fined. The letter of leave, which he had to procure in order to be honorably dismissed, mentioned the amount of his indebtedness, if any, to the master he had just left; and the new master had to see to it that this debt was not left unpaid, but was deducted from his

wages. Inasmuch as many workmen were poor and naturally improvident, most of them were in debt, and the master found the latter a good way of holding his employee responsible. No master could employ a workman unless his book of testimonials for good conduct and his certificate of payment of the registration fees were duly shown. No master must try to entice a workman to leave the shop of another to come to his own (which evidently was done quite frequently). The workmen, too, were prohibited from going abroad, and especially to foreign countries, where they were much in demand. Some were imprisoned and sent to the Bastille for no other reason. That this reactionary policy found severe critics among enlightened persons was but natural. Obligations ought to be mutual, they said, not only on one side; the workmen were not slaves. The wages, too, were considered too small, fixed solely with a view to the advantage of the employer. The many were sacrificed for the few. Accordingly mutinies and strikes were frequent. Apprentices were badly treated and so were

the workmen, and cutting the work was probably considered the only way of getting "even" with the masters. In many shops as soon as a new workman entered work stopped at once and all hands resorted to the tavern. Any other chance of diversion was likewise eagerly sought—habits which seriously interfered with success and the outcome of which was loss. Strikes were of even greater importance. The strike of the silk workers at Lyons in 1744 began as a protest against the regulations of the trade just issued; shops were destroyed, and for a while the strikers were in possession of the town, with the inevitable result of pillage. The regulations were finally revoked, and amnesty was granted after some of the ring-leaders had been sent to the galleys and one hanged. The stronghold of such outbursts of discontent was the trade union, where help and encouragement were given the rebellious workman as well as the peaceful. The municipal police sometimes made raids on the "mother," the tavern, where the companions assembled, seizing papers and money,

when they found any. But, however undesirable from the point of view of peace and of unlimited authority of the privileged classes, the unions could not be abolished; they had to be ignored or tolerated. M. Levasseur reprints some documents showing the rules which governed some of these unions.

The wages paid the workmen at this period appear exceedingly low. If paid by the piece, and not by day as in large establishments, the conditions seem more tolerable. The list of wages, as presented in the large work of M. d'Avenel and reprinted here, may be of particular interest just now (p. 838).<sup>1</sup> In regard to prices M. Levasseur points out that the breadstuffs rose in price constantly from the end of the Seven Years' War till the Revolution. Grain (wheat), of which the average price (1741 to 1750) had been 11.63 francs per hectoliter, after several bad harvests rose to 20 francs. Meat, butter, and eggs rose also. The price of bread in Paris was held down by the municipality, which feared riots, and instead of 16 sous 4 denars,

## AVERAGE OF SALARY ESTIMATED IN FRANCS AND CENTIMES

PERIODS	AGRICULTURAL DAY LABORERS				MASON (per Day) No Board	CARPEN- TERS (per Day) No Board	FOUNDERS AND SMITHS (per Day)
	Male (per Day)		Female (per Day)				
	Board	No Board	Board	No Board			
1701-25.....	0.35	0.70	0.20	0.37	0.98	1.00	....
1726-50.....	0.34	0.68	0.22	0.45	0.94	0.96	....
1751-75.....	0.37	0.75	0.22	0.47	0.90	0.92	0.81
1776-90.....	0.45	0.82	0.27	0.50	1.15	1.20	1.36
Compared with 1890...	1.50	2.50	0.90	1.50	0.40	3.70	....
PERIODS	TAILORS, WEAVERS (per Day) Board	DRESS- MAKERS, MODISTES (per Day) Board	PAINTERS, PLASTERERS (per Day) No Board	BAKERS, BUTCHERS (per Mo.) Board and Lodging	FARM SERVANTS, CARTERS, SHEPHERDS (per Year)	BODY SERVANTS (Men) (per Year)	FARM AND HOUSE SERVANTS (Female) (per Year)
1701-25.....	....	0.26	1.04	....	71.00	55.00	37.00
1726-50.....	0.54	0.15	0.90	12.89	55.00	46.00	30.00
1751-75.....	0.62	0.30	1.12	9.50	63.00	50.00	35.00
1776-90.....	0.75	0.40	1.25	16.59	80.00	77.00	42.00
Compared with 1890...	....	....	3.50	....	350.00	369.00	Farm, 214.00 House, 300.00

which should have been the price in 1789, it was sold at 13, 12, and 10 sous (October, 1790). But even in the provinces bread was cheaper than would be supposed, probably because of the wheat being mixed with other nutritious grains. In 1790 meat had a price corresponding to 0.65 franc per kilogram for beef, veal, and mutton, and 0.79 franc for pork. Milk was 0.27 franc per liter in Paris and 0.15 franc in the provinces; butter was 1.28 francs per kilogram and eggs 2.80 francs per hundred. It is difficult to indicate an average price for the greater number of manufactured goods. In 1790 a pair of shoes cost 4 livres 10 sous and a pair of *sabots* 9 sous (rather cheap when compared with the average wages). The value of money, too, had sunk from 1.22 francs, which the pound tournois was worth from 1701 to 1725, to 0.90 franc from 1759 to 1790. If the salary of the workingmen had risen 20 per cent during the second half of the eighteenth century, the price of bread had risen 37 per cent, and hence the workingman's wages were smaller while appearing higher. M. Levasseur tells us that



an employer feeding four persons daily in 1786 (the workman not counted) needed eight pounds of bread, two pounds of meat, a bottle and a half of wine, besides vegetables, butter, and cheese. The artisan spent little enough on his person or on those who belonged to him. And how could he spend much if the government was to have its due? In fact, as it was, expenses must in most cases have surpassed the income and a deficit been the natural result. The companion, or *canute* as he was called, lived even more modestly. His wages might amount to from 351 to 374 livres per year, but if he lived with his patron, the latter kept 240 livres for his board and other expenses. No wonder that the workman often had to ask for alms. The feelings of the underlings are forcibly expressed in their *cahiers* presented in 1789 to the Constituent Assembly. Here their demands were:

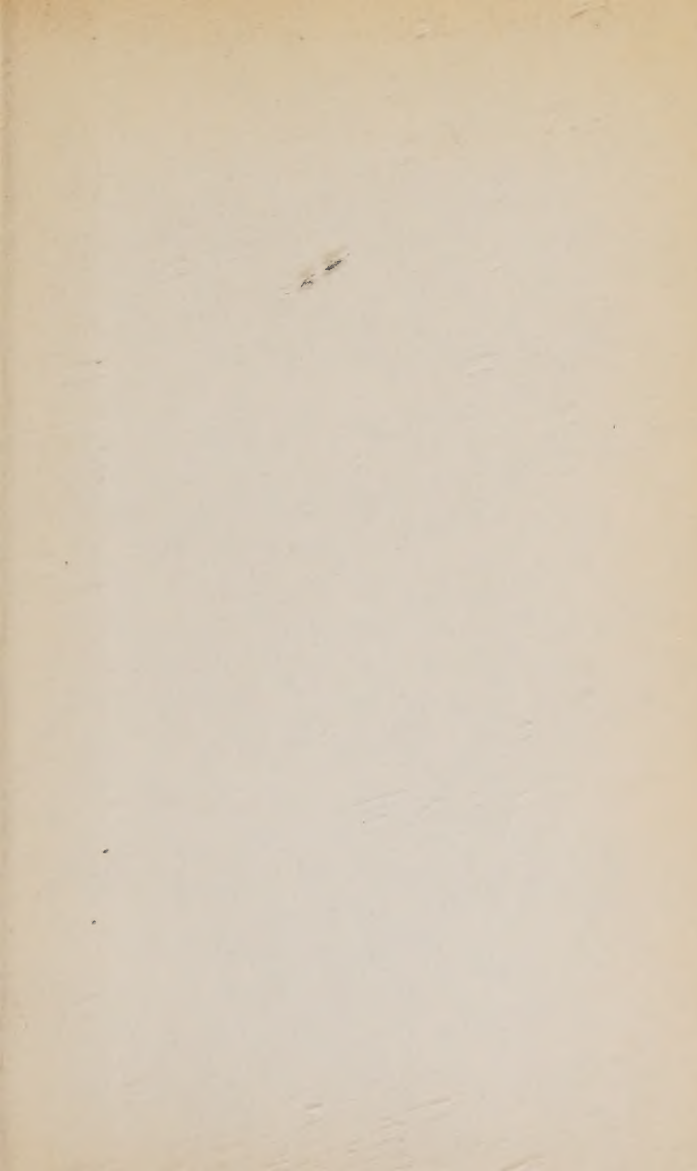
(1) that thenceforth wages be not so coolly calculated to satisfy the murderous maxims of luxury or insatiable cupidity; (2) that the preservation of the hard-working and useful man be a not less sacred

object to the constitution than the property of the rich; (3) that a hard-working and useful man be not left uncertain of how he is to subsist within the extent of the empire.

Other voices were heard in behalf of the working classes; if these had been listened to instead of stifled by the reaction, France might have been spared the great upheaval which, as M. Léon Say says, cost so much in blood and tears.

M. Levasseur closes the chapter with a discussion of the moral condition of the laboring classes. He assures us that good and bad elements were mixed here as elsewhere. Politeness, attractiveness of manner, respectful observance of the general prescripts of the church, and a certain neatness and elegance in appearance and dress seem to have characterized the working classes even then and struck foreigners as peculiar to the French. On the other side, drunkenness and perhaps not a high degree of honesty toward their employers were among the faults most complained of. The educational standard among the poorer layers of French society

was not very high. Primary schools had been in existence since the sixteenth century, but parish schools became common only in the eighteenth. The four rules of arithmetic, the catechism, and the calendar were usually all that was taught. In the towns the Sisters of Charity kept girls' schools and Brethren of the Christian Doctrine had a thousand boys' schools. The registers of the corporations, which were recorded by the masters, show these capable of keeping accounts and wording the minutes. But documents written by subordinate workmen make a much less favorable impression of the practical attainments with which school instruction had equipped them.





AUG 1953

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JUN 1965

JUN 1961

JUL 1963

JUN 1959

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